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THESIS

CIVILIAN HUSBANDS IN THE MILITARY FAMILY: CURRENT ISSUES AND FUTURE CONCERNS

by

Roni S. Johnson

March 1998

Thesis Co-Advisors: Alice Crawford
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This thesis explores various issues confronting women officers and their civilian spouses. Population data are analyzed by officer pay grade and community to describe the increasing proportion of women officers in the Navy and Marine Corps who are married to civilians. Focused interviews were conducted with 32 female officers and their spouses. All interviews were taped and transcribed, from which 25 general themes emerged. These themes cover many topics relating to gender role conflicts, spouse employment challenges, career conflict, spouse support for the officer, and the officer's career intentions. Several conclusions are drawn from the research. It is noteworthy that a vast majority of civilian husbands have military experience. This experience is perceived by many interviewees as the key to the male spouse's ability to successfully cope with the challenges facing him as a trailing spouse or as a primary care-giver for children. For these officers, marriage to a civilian provides more flexibility and less stress than experienced previously when the spouse was also in the military. Most spouses believe the security and benefits derived from their wife's military career outweigh the disadvantages of their mobile lifestyle. Interview excerpts should offer valuable information to decision makers in the area of family support policy.

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CIVILIAN HUSBANDS IN THE MILITARY FAMILY: CURRENT ISSUES AND FUTURE CONCERNS

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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from the

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

During the recent drawdown of the military, the percentage of women in the Navy has steadily increased, as has the number of women who are married. Currently, women comprise 13 percent of the Navy's active-duty force, and 45 percent of these women are married to either active-duty or civilian spouses. Meanwhile, the percentage of women in the United States Marine Corps has remained constant at 5 percent, while the proportion of married women Marines has remained steady at 41 percent. In recent years, particularly since Desert Storm, increased attention has been focused on the difficulties facing dual-military families. However, equally important, but nearly overlooked, is the existence of the active-duty woman married to a civilian. Although these families represent a small minority of the total military population, 72 percent of married Navy women and 46 percent of married women in the Marine Corps have a civilian spouse. The proportion of civilian husbands in both services has increased steadily. In the Navy, the percentage of women officers married to active-duty and civilian spouses has risen as more women have chosen to get married. However, in the Marine Corps, the percentage of women officers married to active-duty spouses has dropped significantly at the same time that the percentage of women with civilians husbands has increased proportionately.

Although the number of male dependent spouses in the military is proportionately small, it is

> less their numbers than their ideological awkwardness that makes "military husbands" politically significant. The military husband is not expected to play the same helpmate, nurturing, soothing role for the

> military as his female counterpart. He is not expected to quit his job and move every time his soldier [sailor] wife is transferred. [Ref. 13:p. 79]

So, what, exactly, is the expected role of the "dependent" husband? It is possible that civilian husbands may have a difficult time subordinating their careers to those of their military wives. American society conditions its members to believe in certain gender roles. Men are expected to be the primary provider for the family; thus, men often seem to tie their identity to their work. Women are conditioned to serve as the primary care-giver of their children, whether they are employed or not. The case of the non-traditional military family severely tests these gender roles, particularly when the woman is the active-duty member and filling the role of primary provider for the family.

Existing research on the male civilian spouse is scarce. Despite the numerous warnings by military sociologists and psychologists over the past two decades that the inevitable growth in this sub-population within the military would require a re-evaluation of existing personnel policies. [Ref. 27; Ref. 19; Ref. 5; Ref. 31] In fact, so little is known that the male civilian spouse has been dubbed the "Forgotten Breed" by one author. [Ref. 29]. Until the 1990s, when the proportion of active-duty women with civilian spouses grew significantly, it was easy to overlook this family type. However, the existence of these families may well have far-reaching policy implications in the areas of personnel assignment, family support, family advocacy, spouse employment assistance, child care, fraternization, and home basing. Ultimately, it is the combined outcome of these policies on the individual service member and her family that will influence the officer's decision to remain in the service.

B. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This thesis investigates issues confronting women officers married to a civilian in the course of their adaptation to military life, and their impact, if any, on retention of the female service member. The purpose of this thesis is twofold: (1) to quantify the size and key characteristics—employment status, number of children, education level, prior military experience—of this population, and how the number of civilian husbands has changed in the Navy and USMC in the 1990s; and (2) to provide descriptive data on the advantages and disadvantages of military life for these non-traditional couples. Specifically, this thesis asks several questions:

1. What are the gender-role conflicts for each spouse?
2. Does the wife's status as primary bread-winner affect the husband's self-esteem?
3. Are veteran spouses more supportive of their wife's career than are husbands with no prior military experience?
4. How do military demands affect the civilian husband's career?
5. How does the civilian husband's employment affect the assignability and retention of the military wife?
6. How are child care and household responsibilities divided between spouses?
7. Do these couples perceive the need for the civilian husband to fill a supporting role to help the officer's career?
8. Is the existing spouse support structure adequate for male spouses?

This information will be useful in understanding how the concerns and needs of this subset of families change over the course of a 20-year military career. Prior studies of military spouses have neglected to address how the traditional roles of spouses may be changing, and what potential impact these changes might have on the quality of community life in the military and/or military careers in the future.

C. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study provided an opportunity for female Navy and Marine Corps officers and their civilian husbands to share their personal experiences and views regarding the impact that military demands have had on their career and family choices. Individual interviews were conducted with 28 Navy and four Marine Corps officers and their husbands for a total sample of 32 couples. The officers ranged in seniority from Lieutenant to Rear Admiral and had been married from one to 18 years. Of the spouses, 25 were prior military, 19 were employed, and nine were stay-at-home care-givers.

Data provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center were used to determine the size of the population of female Navy and USMC personnel married to civilian husbands. Tables showing the percentage of female enlisted and officer personnel married to civilian and military spouses are provided in Chapter II. Data from 1990, 1992, 1995 and 1997 were compared to ascertain any changing trends in marital status over the past eight years. Additionally, data from the Officer Master File provided a current breakdown of the marital and dependency status of male and female officers in the Navy by occupation (designator or community).

D. BENEFIT OF THE STUDY

An extensive body of research on military spouses exists that provides evidence supporting the connection between spouses' satisfaction with military life and the marital satisfaction of couples, and readiness and retention. This relationship between family members' quality of life and Navy goals has implications for manpower policymakers. This study addresses important issues that are quickly becoming more critical as the

demographic composition of the force changes. Further, since most male civilian spouses are veterans, it is useful to analyze the reasons behind their decision to resign and become a dependent spouse. Results of this study should be useful in designing future Navy and DoD personnel surveys. Additionally, the qualitative data provided may save needless resource expenditures for spouse support programs targeted at the civilian husband that may not be necessary.

E. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This study is a ground-breaking effort to build a foundation for future research on military women married to civilian husbands in the Sea Services. Specifically, it explores these families' needs, values, attitudes, and experiences within the military community. Chapter II presents background information on the changing roles and numbers of women in the military, characteristics and demographics of the population of women married to civilian and military spouses, current trends in female marital status in the Navy and Marine Corps, and a comparison of dependency status by officer gender and community. Chapter III provides a review of related literature on military spouses, particularly issues concerning the civilian husband. These include the impact of frequent moves on career goals, child care and household responsibilities, and the effect that fulfilling non-traditional gender roles may have on their self-esteem. Chapter IV discusses the research methodology, data analysis and theme development of the thesis. In Chapter V, data analysis and recurring themes are presented along with supporting excerpts from interviews. Chapter VI discusses major conclusions drawn from the findings and presents recommendations based on the study, as well as potential areas for further study.

II. BACKGROUND

A. FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN THE MILITARY

The representation of women in the military has increased steadily since their right to serve was formalized in Public Law 625, the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948. This law set a 2-percent restriction on the number of women serving in the military. The 2-percent ceiling was removed in 1967 during the Vietnam War, but it was the conversion to an all-volunteer force, and subsequent concerns over manpower shortages in the early 1970s, that resulted in greater numbers of jobs being opened to women. [Ref. 39:p. 10] In 1994, a Secretary of Defense policy memorandum allowed women to serve in many positions that were formally closed to them, after Congress repealed the law that excluded women from serving on combatant ships and flying combat aircraft. As of September 1997, women accounted for 13 percent of the active-duty Navy, including 41,309 enlisted personnel and 7,802 officers. [Ref. 8]

As depicted in Table 1, the percentage of women in the Navy increased between 1990 and 1997—from 9.9 to 12.5 percent. The proportion of women in the officer corps grew by 3 percentage points, from 10.8 percent to 13.8 percent, while the absolute number of women officers in the Navy actually decreased slightly by 25 personnel to 7,802. On the enlisted side, the overall drop in personnel was more dramatic, resulting in a decrease of nearly 8,000 female sailors, while their proportion of the total enlisted force increased from 9.8 to 12.3 percent.

Table 1. Number and Percent of Women in the Active-Duty Navy, by Officer Corps and Enlisted Force, 1990-1997

YEAR	OFFICER		ENLISTED		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
1990	7,827	10.8	49,275	9.8	57,102	9.9
1992	8,300	11.9	47,688	10.2	55,988	10.4
1995	7,899	13.4	44,375	11.9	52,274	12.1
1997	7,802	13.8	41,309	12.3	49,111	12.5

Source: Derived from data provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center.

Similarly, Table 2 shows that the overall number of women in the Marine Corps changed very little from 1990 through 1997. Over this period, women officers have increased in terms of their overall numbers, from 672 in 1990 to 787 in 1997—a net increase of 115 officers. The proportion of women in the entire officer corps has also increased from 3.4 to 4.4 percent. Although the actual number of female enlisted Marines decreased by 148 personnel, their percentage of the enlisted force edged up from 4.9 to 5.4 percent.

Table 2. Number and Percent of Women in the Active-Duty Marine Corps, by Officer Corps and Enlisted Force, 1990-1997

YEAR	OFFICER		ENLISTED		TOTAL	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
1990	672	3.4	8,647	4.9	9,319	4.7
1992	653	3.4	7,704	4.6	8,357	4.5
1995	690	3.8	7,402	4.7	8,092	4.6
1997	787	4.4	8,499	5.4	9,286	5.3

Source: Derived from data provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center.

B. EVOLUTION OF DEPENDENCY REGULATIONS: A BRIEF HISTORY

Although Public Law 625 guaranteed that women could serve in the military, it did not ensure rights and benefits equal to those received by male service members. This was due, in part, to society's negative attitude toward working wives at the time, and a

fear that civilian husbands would take unscrupulous advantage of the largesse of the government and their military wives. Thus, Titles 10 and 37 of the United States Code provided specific tests of dependency that were interpreted for 25 years, until 1973, to mean that a civilian husband was not the dependent of his military wife unless he was dependent upon her for more than 50 percent of his support due to total and permanent mental or physical disability. [Ref. 43:p. 155] Even a male spouse who was a student or retiree could not be considered a dependent because of the prevailing attitude of the time that an American family was supported by the husband or father. [Ref. 44:p. 110] In practice, this meant the civilian husband

> had no type of identification card and hence had to obtain a visitor's pass each time he came on the base, and could not, of course, go to the service club, post exchange, or commissary, or use any recreational facilities such as the swimming pool, golf course, or theater unless accompanied by his wife as her guest. ... he was not entitled to medical care and the couple was not eligible for family housing, travel and transportation allowances for the husband, dislocation allowance, overseas allowances, or a family separation allowance. [Ref. 43:p. 155]

1. Marriage and Pregnancy

Married women were not allowed to enlist in the military until 1971, which was the year the Navy and Air Force rescinded their regulations barring their enlistment. The Army followed suit in 1973, along with the Marine Corps in 1974. [Ref. 45:p. 643] And, from 1951 to 1975 female service members were discharged for pregnancy or parenthood. [Ref. 1:p. 288] This policy was an extension of the attitudes reflecting traditional gender roles at the time. In 1948, a military study group wrote:

> It is believed that a woman who is pregnant should not be a member of the armed forces and should devote herself to the responsibilities which she

has assumed, remaining with her husband and child as a family unit. [Ref. 44:p. 111]

2. Changing Values in Society and the Military

Benefits for service women and their families did not match those given to their male counterparts until the mid-1970s. A combination of events came together to improve the rights of military women. In 1969, the National Military Wives Association was organized to promote the general welfare of military wives and to influence the development of military family policy that focused on spouses' needs. [Ref. 1:p. 289] The end of the draft in 1973 required additional sources of manpower. Congressional passage of the Equal Rights Amendment—though it was never confirmed by the states—pushed the military to resolve problems of sex discrimination and encouraged service women to challenge the constitutionality of policies in the courts. [Ref. 44:p. 28]

On 14 May 1973, in the Frontiero vs. Richardson case, the Supreme Court declared that it was unconstitutional to require only female service members to prove dependency of their spouses and children. The Court ruled that service women were eligible for all benefits, privileges, and rights granted service men under the same circumstances. [Ref. 43:p. 156] In response, DoD directed the services to terminate the practice of involuntary discharges for pregnant or custodial mothers in May 1975. [Ref. 15:p. 301] It also declared that women would be treated equally with men in all matters of dependency and that, in the future, the word "spouse" would replace "wife" and "husband." [Ref. 44:p. 111]

C. MARITAL TRENDS FOR FEMALE NAVAL OFFICERS, 1980-1997

By 1978, nearly 60 percent of all military personnel were married. However, marital status varied greatly across branch of service and by gender. A snapshot of the Navy in 1980 revealed that only 40 percent of women officers were married—15 percent had military spouses and 25 percent had civilian spouses. [Ref. 6:p. 4] By 1986, the proportion of married female officers had decreased slightly to 36 percent, and the proportions with military and civilian spouses were 21 percent and 15 percent, respectively. [Ref. 20:p. 5]

These numbers reflect the impact of the personnel policies discouraging marriage and parenthood that remained in effect until 1975. The numbers also reflect the difficulty most women face as they attempt to balance family life with the demands of a military career, including extended work hours, temporary duty away from home, deployments, and/or unaccompanied tours overseas. The figures in Table 3 show that, even twenty years after the removal of these restrictive polices, the percentage of single female officers in the Navy remains near 50 percent. This compares with 74 percent of male officers in the Navy who are married. It was not until 1995, that the percentage of married women officers—51.5 percent—surpassed the 48.5 percent who were single.

Table 3. Percentage of Female Officers in the Navy Who Are Married, by Military or Civilian Spouse, 1990-1997

YEAR	MARITAL STATUS				
	MILITARY SPOUSE	CIVILIAN SPOUSE	TOTAL MARRIED	SINGLE	TOTAL
1990	4.3	40.1	44.4	54.5	98.9
1992	3.8	42.5	46.3	52.9	99.2
1995	6.6	44.9	51.5	48.5	100
1997	7.6	45.4	53.0	47.0	100

Source: Derived from data provided by Defense Manpower Data Center.

The data in Table 3 illustrate that the proportion of civilian and military spouses have both increased during this period. The proportion of civilian spouses has increased over 5 percentage points from 40.1 to 45.4 percent. Although the proportion of military spouses has climbed from 4.3 to 7.6 percent, this population remains only a fraction of its 21 percent representation found in 1986 when women officers were much more likely to have military spouses.

Table 4 shows the marital status of female Navy officers by pay grade as of September 1997. Only 47 percent of junior officers (pay grade O-1 to O-3) are married; however, 40 percent have a civilian spouse, while only 7 percent are married to military personnel. This large disparity probably reflects the difficulty of assigning both a husband and wife, at least one of which is a junior officer, to the same location during the early stage of their career. All unrestricted line officers and most staff corps and restricted line personnel undergo extensive training that is offered at specific geographical locations, decreasing the flexibility of a joint-assignment.

Table 4. Number and Percent of Female Officers in the Navy by Marital Status, Type of Spouse (Civilian or Military) and Pay Grade, 1997

PAY GRADE	SPOUSE STATUS				SINGLE		TOTAL
	MILITARY		CIVILIAN				
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER
O-1 to O-2	67	3.5	635	32.8	1,234	63.7	1,936
O-3	225	7.8	1,324	45.8	1,343	46.4	2,892
O-4	178	11.1	847	52.6	585	36.3	1,610
O-5	104	10.4	545	54.6	349	35.0	998
O-6	16	6.2	131	50.4	113	43.5	260

Source: Derived from data provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center.

The largest group of civilian spouses, 1,324, are married to Lieutenants. In percentage terms, this represents only 45.8 percent of all O-3s, since the largest proportion, over 46 percent of this category, are single. Ensigns (O-1) and Lieutenants Junior Grade (O-2) are the least likely to have a civilian spouse, at 32.8 percent. The pay grade with the highest percentage of civilian spouses is Commander (O-5), at almost 55 percent.

D. MARITAL TRENDS FOR FEMALE MARINE OFFICERS, 1990-1997

Contrary to the trend displayed in the Navy, women Marines are less likely to be married than are Navy women. However, women Marine officers are much more likely to be married to a military spouse than are their Navy counterparts—19.9 percent compared to 7.6 percent in 1997. As shown in Table 5, the percentage of female Marine officers who are married increased in 1992 to a high of just over 50 percent, before decreasing to a new low of 46.5 percent in 1997.

Table 5. Percentage of Female Officers in the Marine Corps Who Are Married, by Military or Civilian Spouse, 1990-1997

	MARITAL STATUS				
YEAR	MILITARY SPOUSE	CIVILIAN SPOUSE	TOTAL MARRIED	SINGLE	TOTAL
1990	28.6	18.2	46.8	53.2	100.0
1992	26.3	23.9	50.2	49.8	100.0
1995	21.6	28.1	49.7	50.3	100.0
1997	19.9	26.6	46.5	53.5	100.0

Source: Derived from data provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center.

In contrast to representation in the Navy, where the proportion of married women increased, the proportion of married Marine officers remained essentially unchanged during the 1990-1997 period, at 46 percent. However, as seen in Table 5, there appears to

be a shift in family patterns toward civilian spouses. The proportion of military spouses declined over the period by a total of 8.7 percentage points—falling from 28.6 to 19.9 percent—which amounts to nearly a one-third reduction in relative terms. At the same time, the representation of civilian spouses increased by a total of 8.4 percentage points—from 18.2 to 26.6 percent. In relative terms, this amounts to a 46-percent increase in this category.

The marital status for all women Marine officers by pay grade is shown in Table 6. It can be seen here that Marine officers in almost every pay grade are more likely to be married to civilians, particularly once they reach the level of Major (O-4) or higher. The only exception is for female Captains, where the proportion of military spouses (34.2 percent) is slightly greater than for civilian spouses (30.1 percent). Lieutenants, as a category, represent 54 percent of the female officer corps and are the most likely to be unmarried, at over 71 percent.

Table 6. Number and Percent of Female Officers in the Marine Corps by Marital Status, Type of Spouse (Civilian or Military) and Pay Grade, 1997

PAY GRADE	SPOUSE STATUS				SINGLE		TOTAL NUMBER
	MILITARY		CIVILIAN				
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	
O-1 to O-2	44	12.3	58	16.2	256	71.5	358
O-3	50	34.2	44	30.1	52	35.6	146
O-4	21	20.6	39	38.2	42	41.2	102
O-5	8	16.0	20	40.0	22	44.0	50
O-6	--	--	8	72.7	3	27.0	11

Source: Derived from data provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center.

E. CIVILIAN SPOUSE REPRESENTATION IN THE NAVY, 1990-1997

1. Frequency by Officer's Pay Grade in the Navy

Table 7 illustrates how the proportion of male civilian spouses has increased over time in the various officer pay grades. The categories with the largest increases in the percentage of officers with civilian spouses are Captains and the combined grouping of Ensigns and Lieutenants Junior Grade. The proportion of female O-6s married to civilians increased from 33.9 to 50.4 percent. At the same time, the percentage of civilian spouses married to officers in grades O-1 and O-2 increased from 23.9 to 32.8 percent. Spouse representation in the remaining three grades increased by an average of only 1.5 percentage points. Thus, the overall increase in representation of civilian spouses, during this 8-year period is primarily due to large increases in the most junior and senior officer pay grades.

Table 7. Percent of Female Officers in the Navy with a Civilian Husband, by Pay Grade, 1990-1997

PAY GRADE	YEAR				*PERCENT INCREASE
	1990	1992	1995	1997	
O-1 to O-2	23.9	29.8	35.1	32.8	8.9
O-3	44.0	43.6	44.3	45.8	1.8
O-4	51.1	53.6	52.3	52.6	1.5
O-5	53.0	53.9	53.2	54.6	1.6
O-6	33.9	43.4	54.7	50.4	16.5

Source: Derived from data provided by Defense Manpower Data Center.
* This number reflects the percentage increase from 1990 to 1997.

2. Frequency by Officer's Community in the Navy

Just as the increase in civilian husbands has varied across pay grades, their prevalence also varies greatly by officer community. Table 8 provides a snapshot of all Navy women officers by marital status and community in 1997. As can be expected, at

least two-thirds of all women in the warfare communities—71.3 percent of surface warfare officers (111x/116x) and 66.5 percent of aviators (13xx)—are single.

Table 8. Female Officer Marital Status in the Navy by Community, FY 1997

	SPOUSE STATUS						TOTAL
	MILITARY		CIVILIAN		SINGLE		PER
DESIGNATOR*	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	DESIG(S)
111x/116x	89	15.9	72	12.8	400	71.3	561
13xx	97	21.0	58	12.5	308	66.5	463
170x	276	19.7	580	41.3	547	39.0	1403
310x	57	20.3	82	29.2	142	50.5	281
161x	13	11.5	36	31.9	64	56.6	113
163x	40	19.2	55	26.4	113	54.3	208
165x	9	20.5	19	43.2	16	36.4	44
STAFF-MED	687	17.5	1,554	39.7	1,676	42.8	3917
STAFF-OTHER	74	20.2	113	30.8	180	49.0	367
14xx/15xx	27	19.7	48	35.0	62	45.3	137
6xxx/7xxx	78	23.7	117	35.6	134	40.7	329
OTHER**	19	14.7	37	28.7	73	56.6	129
TOTAL	1,466	18.4	2,771	34.8	3,715	46.7	7952

Source: Derived from data obtained from the Navy Officer Master File.
*Key to designators:
111x/116x - surface warfare
13xx - aviation
170x - fleet support
310x - supply corps
161x - cryptology
163x - intelligence
165x - public information
staff med. - medical, dental, medical service corps, nurse corps
staff other - judge advocate general, civil engineer, chaplain corps
14xx/15xx - engineering duty, aviation maintenance
6xxx/7xxx - limited duty officer, chief warrant officer
**Other category includes following designators:
12xx/110x - unrestricted line (various communities except aviation)
112x/117x - submarine
113x/118x - special warfare (SEAL/UDT)
114x/119x - special operations
166x/162x - merchant marine
180x - oceanography
19xx - prospective staff corps
Note: Women are still banned from serving in the submarine and special warfare communities.

Two reasons women aviators and surface warfare officers are more likely to be single are the frequency of deployments and arduous work schedule in these specific communities, which exact a high toll by limiting the available time for interpersonal relationships. It is also less likely that a civilian spouse would understand the need for the frequent training assignments, pre-deployment work-ups and deployments that inevitably take the service member away from the spouse and/or family for many months at a time. This environment might explain why the number of military spouses outnumbers civilian spouses in these specific communities. Twenty-one percent of aviators and nearly 16 percent of surface warriors are married to military husbands, as compared with 12.5 percent who are married to civilian husbands.

As seen in Table 8, officers in the fleet support (170x) and medical staff corps communities are the most likely to have civilian spouses. Nearly 40 percent of all female medical, dental, nurse corps, and medical service corps officers have civilian spouses, which is almost 22 percentage points higher than the proportion (17.5 percent) who have military spouses. Over 41 percent of fleet support officers are married to civilians. Officers in these five communities tend to be shore-based, working under more traditional schedules.

F. CIVILIAN SPOUSE REPRESENTATION IN THE MARINE CORPS, 1990-1997

Table 9 illustrates how the proportion of female Marine officers married to civilian husbands has changed from 1990 through 1997 across the various pay grades. Most striking is the increase in the proportion of Captains who have civilian spouses—

from 30 to 72.7 percent. The next largest increase is 21.2 percentage points for Majors, rising from 17 to 38.2 percent.

Table 9. Percent of Female Officers in the Marine Corps with a Civilian Husband, by Pay Grade, 1990-1997

PAY GRADE	YEAR				*PERCENT INCREASE
	1990	1992	1995	1997	
O1-O2	15.5	17.9	18.5	16.2	0.7
O-3	18.8	22.7	27.5	30.1	11.3
O-4	17.0	31.1	41.2	38.2	21.2
O-5	34.6	44.1	36.0	40.0	5.4
O-6	30.0	66.7	72.7	72.7	42.7

Source: Derived from data provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center.
* This number represents the percentage increase from 1990 to 1997.

These figures show that only in grades O-3 and O-6 has their been a steady increase in the proportion of civilian spouses. In the other pay grades, the trend has been generally upward, with brief downturns along the way. This phenomenon is most likely a natural outgrowth of promotion flow points and retention decisions made by the officers, rather than a brief change in spouse preference by the groups as a whole.

G. FREQUENCY OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN THE NAVY

The 1992 DoD Survey of Officer and Enlisted Personnel revealed that among the four services, officers in the Navy are the least likely to have children. Only 57 percent of dual-military couples in the Navy had children, compared with 74 percent of officers married to civilian spouses. [Ref. 7:p. 34] Since the survey, the number of Navy families with children has declined noticeably. In 1997, the proportion of dual-military couples with children had fallen to 31 percent, a decline of 26 percentage points. Similarly, the proportion of civilian spouse couples with children had declined slightly from 74 percent

to just below 71 percent. These figures parallel family patterns in society as a whole, where the trend is that fewer couples are having children. [Ref. 34]

Within the Navy, the percentage distribution of families with children varies greatly across officer communities. The likelihood also depends on officer gender, as was the propensity to be married. Tables 10 and 11 provide a breakdown of Navy families with at least one child by officer gender, community, and spouse status. Table 10 is a snapshot of all officers married to civilian spouses, and Table 11 provides data on all officers married to military spouses. These tables show that officers with civilian spouses are nearly one-third more likely to have children, and that male officers are more likely than female officers to have children. The proportion of male officers with children is 30 percentage points higher if they are married to a civilian spouse (71.9 percent), than if the spouse is also a military member (42 percent). Likewise, the proportion of female officers who have children is over 34 percentage points greater if the woman is married to a civilian husband (56.2 percent), than one who is also in the military (21.9 percent). This difference seems to confirm the notion that it is much easier for a Navy officer to balance the demands of work and family when his or her spouse is a civilian.

Among officers married to civilians, the percentage who have children is highest among limited duty officers (LDOs) and chief warrant officers (CWOs)—designators 6xxx/7xxx. Intuitively, this finding stands to reason, since these officers are generally older, and the propensity to have children increases with age. [Ref. 34] It is noteworthy that officers in the engineering duty communities (14xx/15xx) have the second-highest

percentage with children—68.4 percent of women and 87.7 percent of men. Women officers least likely to have children are in the aviation community (25.9 percent), followed by the surface community (29.2 percent). Male officers within the fleet support and surface communities are the least likely to have children—63.9 and 65.1 percent, respectively.

Among dual-military couples, the patterns are similar. The LDOs and CWOs are most likely to have children. Women aviators and supply corps officers (310x) are least likely to have children—6.2 percent and 7 percent, respectively. At the same time, male fleet support officers and aviators are the least likely to have children—30.8 percent and 32.6 percent, respectively.

Table 10. Percentage of Officers Married to Civilian Spouses Who Have Children by Community and Gender, FY 1997

	OFFICER GENDER					
	FEMALE			MALE		
DESIGNATOR*	W/ KIDS	PERCENT	TOTAL	W/ KIDS	PERCENT	TOTAL
111x/116x	21	29.2	72	3,389	65.1	5,204
13xx	15	25.9	58	6,322	65.9	9,589
170x	346	59.7	580	248	63.9	388
310x	47	57.3	82	1,420	71.2	1,995
161x	16	44.4	36	338	70.6	479
163x	27	49.1	55	529	65.9	803
165x	9	47.4	19	101	82.1	123
STAFF-MED	910	58.6	1,554	4,291	76.4	5,613
STAFF-OTHER	49	43.4	113	1,494	73.6	2,030
14xx/15xx	29	60.4	48	1,227	83.5	1,469
6xxx/7xxx	80	68.4	117	4,131	87.7	4,709
OTHER**	9	24.3	37	2,430	66.6	3,649
TOTAL	1,558	56.2	2,771	25,920	71.9	36,051

Source: Derived from data obtained from the Navy Officer Master File.
* See Table 8 for designator descriptions.
**See Table 8 for designators included in this category.

Table 11. Percentage of Officers Married to Military Spouses Who Have Children by Community and Gender, FY 1997

	OFFICER GENDER					
	FEMALE			MALE		
DESIGNATOR	W/ KIDS	PERCENT	TOTAL	W/ KIDS	PERCENT	TOTAL
111x/116x	13	14.6	89	67	36.4	184
13xx	6	6.2	97	85	32.6	261
170x	55	19.9	276	4	30.8	13
310x	4	7.0	57	42	53.2	79
161x	2	15.4	13	9	42.9	21
163x	7	17.5	40	20	55.6	36
165x	1	11.1	9	1	25.0	4
STAFF-MED	174	25.3	687	172	45.0	382
STAFF-OTHER	12	16.2	74	20	35.7	56
14xx/15xx	6	22.2	27	15	44.1	34
6xxx/7xxx	38	48.7	78	85	65.4	130
OTHER	3	15.8	19	35	28.9	121
TOTAL	321	21.9	1,466	555	42.0	1,321

Source: Derived from data obtained from the Navy Officer Master File.
* See Table 8 for designator descriptions.
**See Table 8 for designators included in this category.

H. SUMMARY

This chapter presents data revealing several trends in the Navy with respect to the representation of women officers and changes in their marital status since 1990. Specifically, the proportion of women officers has increased from 10.8 to 13.8 percent. As the proportion of married officers has risen from 44 to 53 percent, the percentage with civilian spouses has increased steadily from 40 to 45 percent in the 1990s. This increase in civilian spouses is most prevalent in the very junior (O-1 and O-2) and senior (O-6) officer pay grades, with smaller increases among the middle ranks. Female officers in the fleet support and medical-related staff corps communities are the most likely to have a civilian spouse, while aviators and surface warriors are more likely to be single or dual-

military. Finally, women officers with civilian spouses are much more likely to have children, although not as likely as male officers who are married to civilians.

The proportion of women Marine officers increased slightly during this period from 3.4 to 4.4 percent. Although the percentage of officers who are married has remained steady, around 46 percent, there has been a definite shift in family patterns away from the dual-military couple. In 1990, 61 percent of male spouses were military. However, this proportion decreased to 43 percent by 1997, and the percentage of civilian spouses increased to 57 percent. Like the Navy, the proportion of civilian spouses increased across all pay grades. The most noteworthy increases were in pay grades O-6 and O-4, which were 42 and 21 percentage points, respectively.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. RETENTION IMPLICATIONS

1. Spouse Satisfaction and Servicemember Retention

Research on military families has found that spouses have a great deal of influence on the reenlistment decision-making process. Family attitudes toward the military, and the military's responsiveness to families, have been demonstrated to influence the work commitment of soldiers. [Ref. 36] Segal and Harris (1993) developed a model of retention behavior based on empirical research carried out under the Army Family Research Program. The nature of the model's variables suggest that the results could be generalized to the other services. The authors concluded:

> Spouse attitudes have an impact on soldier attitudes and behavior above and beyond the soldier's attitudes. There is even evidence that the spouse's attitude sometimes has more influence on the soldier's actual reenlistment behavior than the soldier's own predilection. [Ref. 40:p. 17]

2. Limitations of Existing Research

It is important to consider the possible limitations of relying strictly on models for predicting retention. Several factors may affect the model's predictive power including: gender of service member, marital status (military or civilian spouse), branch of service, member's and spouse's stage in the life-cycle, existence of children, and length of marriage. Often, data may not exist to account for these differences so they are glossed over.

a. Differences Across Branch of Service

According to one military psychiatrist, it is important to recognize major differences in the various branches of the military, although the tendency has been to

generalize remarks about military family life across all services. Attention must be given to these differences because:

> There are variations in the nature of the personnel in each branch, the types of available duty stations, the length and frequency of separations and deployments, the way each group is trained to see itself and the nature of its mission. [Ref. 19:p. 12]

b. Importance of Life-cycle Analysis

Sheehy, in her landmark work Passages, established that adult life proceeds by developmental stages, each often marked by a crisis or turning point that guides individual decision-making. [Ref. 42] Additionally, it has been shown that marital understanding and satisfaction are curvilinear over the life-cycle of a family, thus the importance of doing analysis within life-cycle stages. One method of accomplishing this is to control for age and presence of children at home as proxies of family life-cycle. [Ref. 2:p. 157]

c. Methodology and Interpretation

Another pitfall with blindly accepting most military research on family support issues and morale is that the "couple" is viewed as the unit for interpretation, whereas the data come from each individual separately. [Ref. 9] Thus, it is important to gather and compare data from both spouses to truly understand the link between spouse satisfaction and the member's retention behavior.

Finally, most existing models and studies are the result of data based on the traditional family type—male-member/civilian wife. Yet, today's military is comprised of a great diversity of family patterns. An Army study has shown the value in comparing how different family patterns affect adaptation to life in the Army. The

authors also recommend more intensive research be conducted to explore the special needs required by each family type. [Ref. 5]

B. POTENTIAL ISSUES CONFRONTING CIVILIAN HUSBANDS

The focus of this section is on potential areas of stress confronting the female-member/civilian husband family type. The premise of the present study is that life experiences and areas of conflict are likely to differ by the spouse's gender, veteran status, and family type. Of particular interest is how the civilian husband adapts to the challenges and stresses of the military lifestyle.

1. Societal Stereotypes and Gender Role Conflict

The marriage between a civilian man and female service member probably most challenges traditional societal and military role expectations. Individuals are socialized into gender role norms from birth onward. These roles entail standards or expectations that men and women fit to varying degrees. As one psychologist writes:

> Not conforming to these standards has negative consequences for self-esteem and other outcomes reflecting psychological well-being because of negative social feedback as well as internalized negative self-judgments. [Ref. 23:p. 13]

This would seem to be particularly true for men who experience the need to prove their masculinity to themselves and others. However, not all individuals experience equal levels of gender role strain. The degree to which a civilian husband experiences conflict in his role depends upon his level of endorsement of the traditional masculinity ideology of his culture. [Ref. 23:p. 20] As late as 1985, women were still

> expected to fit careers around child rearing and husbands' career needs; men are enjoined to find success outside the home. Role conflict arises not only from the expectations of others (spouse, family, coworkers) but

> also from internalized, deeply held conceptions of gender roles. [Ref. 35: p. 986]

Thus, the male spouse may suffer negative consequences—lowered self-esteem, frustration, or worse—if his military wife earns a higher income than he does. Conversely, if the male spouse is secure in his role and values his contributions to the family, then his internal stress level will likely be lower and his self-esteem higher.

a. Couples and Financial Control

Resource theory predicts that the larger the wife's percentage of income, the greater is her control over financial matters in the family. Socialization theory prescribes that it is part of the husband's role as head of household to control financial matters, regardless of the wife's income. The equality model predicts that among dual-income families, both will share in managing tasks, regardless of the percentage of the wife's income. A mid-1980s study of the relationship between income and control over financial decision making in civilian dual-career families revealed that these professional women were still bound by traditional gender role stereotypes. When income was skewed—either spouse earned substantially more than the other—the socialization model fit. When the wife's income nearly equaled her husband's, financial control seemed to shift to the equality model. [Ref. 46] It is unknown whether these results can be generalized to cover financial control in military families.

b. Importance of Spouse Having Military Experience

On a positive note, there are two reasons to suspect that, in a majority of cases, the civilian husband will not suffer excessive internal turmoil over his supportive, trailing spouse role. Results of the 1992 DoD Survey of Officer and Enlisted Personnel

and Spouses revealed that a large proportion (73 percent) of civilian husbands have some prior military service. [Ref. 28] This is important because anecdotal evidence suggests that veteran male spouses adapted more easily to the demands of time and relocation required by the military "because they understand the military." [Ref. 37:p. 209] In some instances, the spouse may even be retired and already contributing a pension to the family's income. In fact, 10 percent of the male spouses responding to the 1992 DoD survey indicated they were retired when questioned about their employment status. [Ref. 26:p. 9] Thus, these spouses may feel more secure in the knowledge that they are not financially dependent upon their wives.

Second, assuming a majority of these civilian husbands are familiar with the demands made by the military, they have most likely "self-selected" themselves into these relationships knowing the difficulties facing them. One could reasonably hypothesize, that in these cases the employed male spouses have chosen careers more suitable to geographic mobility. Or, possibly, the couple may have consciously decided that the wife's military career will temporarily take precedence, perhaps until retirement, at which time the civilian husband's career will take priority.

2. Military Institutional Norms and Bias

Chapter II revealed that the military institution has been slow to recognize the male spouse as a "dependent." One well-publicized example of how the civilian husband is often overlooked concerns the arrival of the 1982-1983 medical intern class at the Naval Hospital in San Diego:

> An orientation program was presented for them and their spouses which included a review of gynecological services available and a presentation

> by the Navy Doctors' Wives Club. There was nothing special, however, planned for the male spouses of arriving interns. [Ref. 19:p. 13]

Incidents such as this one are common in a military that is still very much a man's world. With women comprising a small minority of the active-duty population, at about 13 percent, they are often "token females" within their individual units. Rarely do women make up a large proportion of a command's assigned personnel. This fact repeatedly surfaces in the media's coverage of the services' difficulties in fully integrating women into their ranks. Sexual discrimination and harassment are prevalent, making military life uncomfortable for these women, and possibly leading to worry and distress for the civilian husband who must sit back as a helpless bystander. This is an area of concern that military wives normally never have to worry about—that is, whether their husbands will be mistreated by their peers and superiors as a result of their gender.

This is another area where the male's social conditioning may make it more difficult for him to cope with his wife's military career. Men are socialized to protect the "weaker sex," keeping their wives and daughters out of harm's way. When the civilian husband, who may or may not have much first-hand knowledge of the military, must wait patiently while his wife is subjected to injury or death, he will likely feel some amount of internal stress. He may also suffer some degree of jealousy or mistrust of either his military wife, or her male coworkers, during periods of separation or deployment, depending on his maturity and the level of mutual trust in the marriage. Of concern is how he copes with these emotions, because "as parents experience the limits of their own adaptive functioning, the child who partially draws his or her strength from them will concomitantly experience dysfunction and distress." [Ref. 19:p. 51]

a. Importance of Spouse Support Networks

A group of Navy aviators' wives were studied in the early 1980s to determine how they coped during their spouse's deployments. [Ref. 6] The authors found that social bonds with other people were the wives' best coping mechanism. Of particular importance were their ties with informal wives clubs and other family members. The women, as well as their husbands, agreed that civilians outside of the military community did not seem to understand what military life was like, or relate to the special difficulties unique to the military lifestyle. [Ref. 6:p. 33] To the extent that these findings hold today, one must wonder if these informal networks also provide satisfactory support for the civilian husband?

As already stated, especially in the case of officers, women in the military are often assigned to units singularly or in small groups. In these instances, or rarely ever, is there a "husbands club." The male spouse is often excluded from the wives club, or, if invited, may feel uncomfortable about joining a group of women he has trouble relating to, or that make him feel inferior. Thus, the male spouse usually depends upon his place of employment to provide a social network. This only reaffirms the importance of employment to the civilian husband's well-being. Without it, the civilian husband may find no other peers with whom he can identify and establish bonds. There may be no one available to help him pass through the adjustment phase that follows every move. In the case where the man is a full-time caregiver, he will likely have greater difficulty in coping if he doesn't have family or other close friends nearby to assist in the absence of his military wife.

b. The Spouse's Role in the Military Community

It has been argued by one military sociologist that the military as an institution began to undergo a fundamental shift to a more occupational model with the switch to an all-volunteer force in 1973. [Ref. 31] This is significant because, in an institutional military, the spouse is expected to fulfill certain roles in the military community—e.g., participate in social functions and volunteer on base. Two decades ago, unlike today, most military spouses were civilian wives, unemployed outside of the home. These wives had the time and inclination to fill this supportive, social role. [Ref. 31]

However, military spouse demographics and labor participation rates have changed significantly in the past 20 years. In 1996, the Department of Labor reported that over half (53 percent) of all married couples were dual-worker families. The proportion of families in which the husband or wife were the sole provider was much smaller, 19 percent and 5 percent, respectively. Further, in families with children under the age of 18 years, both parents were employed 64 percent of the time. [Ref. 11] Thus, civilian wives and husbands are more likely to be employed full-time and unwilling, or, unable to fill these institutional roles. Yet, despite policy—DoD Directive 1400.33—that specifically forbids consideration of a spouse's employment, educational, or volunteer activities in the evaluation of a service member's performance, many individuals in the military and their spouses still believe that volunteer activities are required. [Ref. 33:p. 12] Stereotypes and culture are slow to change. Thus, to the extent that the civilian

husband feels the pressure to fill this traditional role he may feel uncomfortable or simply refuse altogether.

3. Family and Household Responsibilities

The military places a unique set of pressures on its members and their families. The member is on duty 24 hours a day and must be prepared to sacrifice time with his/her family when called upon, often at short notice. Characteristics of this lifestyle include risk of injury or death of the service member, frequent relocations, periodic separation of the member and the family, and possible residence in foreign countries. For these reasons, the military has been called a "greedy" institution. [Ref. 38:p. 12]

Traditionally, these demands were not unbearable because the civilian wife subordinated herself to her husband's career. Her primary role was one of supporter and primary caregiver to their children. If she worked at all, her career was secondary, and subject to interruptions due to frequent relocation. During periods of separation from the member, the wife was thrust into the role of sole parent. She often relied on a mixture of informal and formal support mechanisms to cope with common problems such as loneliness, physical illness, and problems with children. This support network consisted primarily of extended family, friends, and the military wives club. [Ref. 6:p. 52]

Interviews of military wives have shown that the most difficult area of adjustment during times of separation is the loss of the husband's companionship, followed by feelings of extreme loneliness, making decisions alone, lack of social outlets, and child discipline. [Ref. 16:p. 179] Additionally,

> wives of military personnel, particularly in young families often feel a lack of support...when separated from parents or other extended family

members or friends. As a result they may turn to alcohol, tranquilizers, or sedatives for relief and as a "trusted friend." [Ref. 19:p. 74]

There is no reason to believe that these factors would not also prove very stressful for military husbands, because they are in a "marginal, atypical, minority role." [Ref. 19: p. 74] It has been argued that civilian husbands of military women can be considered tokens in the military community due to "their numerical under representation among civilian spouses," and their "social isolation and encapsulation into gender stereotyped roles." [Ref. 4:p. 14] The author provides anecdotal evidence that suggests the civilian husband may experience stress and lowered self-esteem as a result of his token status. If this is true, the male spouse may be at a disadvantage. The male gender role, "emphasizing achievement, success and emotional inexpressiveness," may make it difficult for men to seek support when they are under stress. [Ref. 3:p. 179] Further, "males' expectations for success when seeking social support may be low, stemming from negative childhood and adolescent experiences when they sought help on emotional issues." [Ref. 3:p. 180]

a. The Male Stay-At-Home Care-Giver

In 1997, it was estimated that there were over a half-million stay-at-home dads. [Ref. 32] Although society has yet to fully accept this role for men, these numbers are likely to increase as women continue to advance in their careers and achieve wage parity with their male counterparts, thus giving them sufficient means to support their families. Eventually, the assumption that the man must be a failure in the workplace if he is unemployed, will change as more families explore this option. [Ref. 32]

Men have various reasons for assuming this role traditionally assigned to the woman. A successful dentist gave up his career suddenly after 17 years to spend more time with his youngest daughter who was 5-years old. The response of his friends and co-workers was one of shock, "What? Are you crazy?...Why, in the world, would you want to give up private practice?" The father explained:

> One day I saw a sad, far-away look in my daughter's eyes as Grandma drove her to ballet class. Then, it hit me. I was a father, but I hadn't been a parent. I was a successful doctor, but my daughter and I had been heading in opposite directions from the beginning. So, I quit, at first, planning to find similar work closer to home. As an attorney, my wife worked more hours than I did, so I could afford to stay home for just a while, then I'd go back to work...I couldn't waste all that training, right? ... Now, two years later I'm a homemaker. I'm not crazy. I love my kids. That's why I quit. I needed to be a part of their lives, just as they needed me. [Ref. 17]

Probably the closest insight into the psychological effects of being a male primary care-giver can be understood by the comments of Joseph Oberle, author of Diary of a Mad Househusband, who writes:

> It's easy to feel alone when you're a man home all day with kids. Although everyone seemed to have a cousin whose brother's friend was doing it, too, I never actually met another stay-at-home dad. [Ref. 32]

Another stay-at-home dad and self-employed songwriter states:

> The tension here is between what men were raised to think they should be and what reality is demanding of them. For all the enlightened talk, people still look on the man who stays at home as a little strange. ... When you're raised to think masculinity is paychecks and chewing tobacco, it's hard to take pride in changing diapers and packing lunch boxes. [Ref. 21]

This father went on to describe his initial adjustment to this non-traditional role:

> At first it was the classic reversal. My wife would come home excited and happy about her work, and I would be feeling frustrated and short-tempered after only being able to squeeze in 20 minutes of songwriting in a day of chasing around after the kids. Now that they're both in school and I have chunks of time for music, I like my hours with them even better. [Ref. 21]

b. Division of Household Labor

Division of household labor may be another area of stress for the female-member, civilian husband couple, particularly if he is unemployed and feels demeaned in any way by doing what society as deemed "women's work." Yet, data exist that this stereotypical role may be changing. A recent Gallup poll revealed that men today are much more involved in doing household chores than was the post-WWII generation. [Ref. 30] Another source claims that women are working a double shift, "one at home and one at their paid job." [Ref. 18] One study found that employed men seem to be more willing to share in some household tasks. The author found that when dual-earner couples shared responsibility for household work, "communication and interactions between the spouses will increase enhancing their marital happiness." [Ref. 41:p. 39]

One advantage male spouses may have over their more traditional female counterparts is in the area of handling household crises. It is possible that a man may feel more comfortable with handling routine home and automobile repairs, as well as managing financial matters in his wife's absence, due to the male socialization process.

c. The Military and Divorce

Divorce among military personnel is another concern. While all married couples struggle to maintain a successful marriage, the unique set of stresses faced by military marriages are well documented. [Ref. 19; Ref. 38] The stress of divorce may

adversely affect an individual's military career in various ways including delays in promotion. [Ref. 10] Successful management of both marriage and a military career may be more difficult for women than for men. Military women are less likely than men to be married or have children, and enlisted men are less likely to divorce than enlisted women in their first term [Ref. 10; Ref. 38] Chapter II of this study and a recent Navy Times special report reaffirm these findings. For Navy officers, women are 2.5 times more likely to divorce or be widowed than men. In the Marine Corps, women officers are 3.2 times more likely to divorce or be widowed than men. [Ref. 34:p. 15] One explanation for these statistics is that:

> a military career requires that it take precedence over all other family goals.... When a non-military spouse has a career that is perceived as being of equal importance to the career of the military spouse, a family crisis may occur. [Ref. 16:p. 7]

It was also discovered that civilian husbands in specialized or technical fields were less able to adapt, causing many marriages to fail. These findings reinforce the notion that the potential for conflict between military service and family life is greater for women than for men. Eventually, this conflict leads to one of several options. Either one of the spouses gives up their career, they suffer through a temporary period of separation, or they divorce.

There are several problems with these statistics. First, they do not control for when the divorce occurred—before or during military service. Second, the data from which these statistics are generated include all types of marriages—dual-military and civilian spouse arrangements. Thus, it would be wrong to simply assume that the reason

women in the military divorce at a greater rate is because their civilian spouses are uncomfortable with, or, unwilling to subordinate their careers.

4. Career Progression and Conflict

The employment status of spouses has been found to be related to their satisfaction with military life and their support for remaining in the military. It has also been shown that the inability of a spouse to get, or maintain a job, is related to dissatisfaction with the military way of life, while, conversely, being employed is related to more effective coping by spouses during times of separation. [Ref. 14]

The employment status of the civilian spouse is increasingly the greatest cause of stress in many military households, regardless of family type, but particularly for junior enlisted personnel experiencing financial hardships. Frequent relocations are costly and can be detrimental to the spouse's ability to pursue a meaningful, rewarding career. The migrant status of these individuals may inhibit the full use of previously acquired skills. Thus, the returns to the civilian spouse's education and experience are likely to be lower, relative to a stationary worker in a more traditional civilian situation.

a. Spouse Need for Employment Assistance

In the corporate world, family resistance to relocation is increasing along with the growing percentage of dual-income couples. [Ref. 12:p. 292] Scarce research has been done on the employment assistance needs of the male trailing spouse despite projections that they will make up 24 percent of all accompanying spouses by the year 2000. [Ref. 12:p. 294] It has been shown that unemployment can have a psychological impact on the spouse (e.g., depression, lowered self-esteem) and family (e.g., marital

stress). [Ref. 12:p. 293] Thus, spouses may be interested in two types of assistance—job-related and counseling-related.

One study of dual-income, relocated couples from numerous organizations across the United States found that the gender of the accompanying spouse and job-seeking self-efficacy were determinants in understanding spouses' need for employment assistance. Specifically:

> Male spouses expressed less interest in counseling-related relocation service than female spouses. Men and women expressed equal interest in job-related employment assistance. Some evidence also exists that female employees tend to be more concerned about the long-term impact the relocation may have on their spouse's career than do male employees. ... The types of services rated most important by spouses included resume writing, learning how to market oneself to potential employers, and assistance conducting a long distance job search. [Ref. 12:p. 303-304]

In some cases, the male spouse may even become discouraged, and refuse to work at all rather than be "under-employed." In situations where he does accept a job below his experience and skill level, there is bound to be frustration in the lack of challenge in his work. If the man is retired or has prior military service, and is accustomed to having greater responsibility in his work, he may once again feel frustrated in his current position.

b. The Effect of the Member's Irregular Work Schedule

In addition to frequent rotation, other factors such as long and irregular duty hours of military personnel may inhibit their spouses from participating fully in the labor market. In the case where the male civilian spouse serves as primary care-giver for young children, he may be prevented from working outside the home or limited to part-time employment. Another option in this situation is to find employment that allows the

care-giver the flexibility of working within the home. Of course, this option works best for self-employed individuals such as consultants, although some occupations are flexible enough to accommodate this possibility. In traditional military families—now a minority of the population—this work-family conflict is not as great a source of stress. The unemployed civilian wife knows her primary role is to support her husband's career and to raise the children. Working outside the home is generally of secondary importance and may not be as crucial to her identity as a person. However, to the degree the civilian husband bases his identity upon his work, the greater his role conflict and dissatisfaction with his wife's military career.

c. Civilian Employer Inflexibility

Another difficulty the working civilian husband may encounter is employer inflexibility. Society is still relatively uncomfortable with situations of role-reversal. Many employers may still reflect the belief that the woman should be the children's main nurturer and care provider. They expect the mother to take off from work when a child becomes ill. The man is not expected to miss work unless the children have a contagious condition such as measles or chicken pox. Thus, the employed civilian husband may find himself the subject of resentment in the work place if he must take time off because of family considerations. This conflict is only magnified during periods in which the military wife is away on deployment and unable to share equally in child-care responsibilities. One would expect that most employers should become more understanding of such situations as time passes and as the skyrocketing divorce rate in this country continues to create large numbers of single parents of both genders.

C. EXISTING FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

There are several sources of formal and informal family support within the military community. The wives and spouses clubs are informal organizations, usually available at most sea-going units and some shore-based commands. The formal support mechanisms are the primary focus of this section.

Within the Navy, Family Service Centers (FSCs) deliver the most diverse collection of support programs, covering such areas as deployment support, relocation assistance, employment assistance, and crisis response. Family Advocacy Program (FAP) services are delivered through coordinated efforts of Medical Treatment Facilities and FSCs. Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) provides on-base child care at Child Development Centers (CDCs) as well as community activities for recreation. Pastoral services are provided through base chapels ashore and unit chaplains afloat. [Ref. 10:Appendix B]

1. Family Service Centers

The mission of the FSC is to support the fleet in achieving operational readiness, member retention, and a reasonable quality of life. In carrying out this mission, the FSCs offer 13 core programs, several of which are targeted specifically at first-term enlisted personnel:

> Deployment Support, Relocation Assistance (RAP), Family Education, Command and Community Consultation, Crisis Response Support, FAP, Transition Assistance Management (TAMP), Personal Financial Management, Counseling, Spouse Employment Assistance (SEAP), Cultural Adjustment/Indoctrination Assistance, Ombudsman Program, and the Volunteer Program. [Ref. 10:Appendix B]

These programs are implemented through three functions, including information and referral, education and training, and counseling. Within the Bureau of Naval Personnel, the Personal, Family and Community Support Division (Pers-66), under the Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel for Personal Readiness and Community Support (Pers-6), has primary program responsibility. However, Congress has mandated that DoD maintain specific funding levels for the Relocation, Transition, and Family Advocacy Programs, thus protecting them during the recent downsizing of the Navy. [Ref. 10:Appendix B]

As a result of the recent downsizing of the military and shrinking defense budgets, it is unclear what the future holds in the area of family support. The FSCs are currently attempting to spend their scarce resources in areas that will help the greatest number of people. One FSC Director emphasized that "quality of life is a big deal to the Navy, but the funds are being cut. The irony in this situation is that, as the Navy reduces its forces, the need for our services continues to expand." [Ref. 24]

Another current area of concern within the DoN is the issue of domestic violence. [Ref. 24] History has shown that most offenders are men. The Navy is having to reconsider its standard response to reports of domestic violence when the victim is the female service member and the abuser is a male civilian. Treatment and prevention were simpler when the perpetrator was also the active-duty sponsor. In that case, he or she can be ordered to attend counseling and/or to move out of the home and away from the victim. This is not an option when the abuser is a civilian and not under the jurisdiction of the military.

2. Child Development Centers

Navy child development programs are operated by MWR and include center-based care, family home care, and resource and referral. These programs are provided as a service to support active-duty members and full-time employed spouses. At the end of fiscal year 1992, child care capacity existed for 21,500 children, which included the capacity of 12,400 CDCs; the existing enrollment in Family Home Care; and 800 children receiving care through the Resource and Referral pilot program. [Ref. 10:Appendix B]

3. Dad-to-Dad Network™

This is an international organization formed to provide networking opportunities and support for the male stay-at-home care-giver. Twenty-two chapters are located in ten states and five different countries. The organization publishes a quarterly newsletter listing the names, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of participating members. These contacts are available to facilitate in forming children's playgroups and to provide a peer network for sharing experiences and advice. The organization also co-sponsors an annual At-Home Dads' Convention. [Ref. 17]

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. DATA COLLECTION

This thesis uses information obtained through in-depth interviews, supplemented by theoretical research and secondary analyses from the 1992 DoD Survey of Military Spouses. The interview sample consisted of 28 female Navy officers ranging in seniority from Lieutenant to Rear Admiral, and their spouses. Additionally, four female Marine Corps officers—two Captains and two Majors—were interviewed along with their spouses. The sample of officers represented various communities, commissioning sources, professional backgrounds and levels of experience. Appendix A provides the breakdown of officers interviewed by service and community. The spouse sample represented a wide range of occupational backgrounds, including nine who had retired from military service. Only seven spouses had no prior service experience, and 13 of the spouses were either unemployed, students, or stay-at-home care-givers. Appendix B provides demographic data on the officers and Appendix C gives demographic data on the spouses.

Additionally, data were obtained from the Defense Manpower Data Center to determine the size of the various family sub-populations (dual-military, military wife/civilian husband, single, military husband/civilian wife) within the Navy and Marine Corps. A FSC Director was interviewed to supplement the thesis in the area of existing family support programs and services. Statistics were obtained from the Naval Medical Information Management Center regarding incidents of substantiated spouse and child abuse in the Navy to determine if the prevalence of abuse coincided in any way with

family type. However, the data maintained in the National Registry at Bethesda Naval Hospital were not specific enough to allow the researcher to determine the military or civilian status of the victim and exact relationship to the sponsor. Therefore, these data were not used in the thesis.

The researcher conducted and recorded personal interviews on audio cassettes. Sixty-four interviews were conducted with the female officers and their spouses to determine how these couples have adapted to the demands of the military, and what impact, if any, this mobile lifestyle has had on their individual career and family decisions. The interviews were transcribed, verbatim, for ease of analysis.

Twenty-seven couples from among the staff and student population at the Naval Postgraduate School were interviewed. In addition, five couples from other installations were interviewed via telephone to increase the size and breadth of the sample. The officers and their spouses in the sample had been married from one to 18 years.

Prior to beginning each interview, the researcher made every effort to place the interviewee at ease by setting a tone of trust and confidentiality. Each interview was conducted in a private room or at the interviewee's residence to inspire casual conversation and candid responses to the questions. The interviewees seemed to feel comfortable exchanging their experiences with the researcher, by virtue of the fact that the author is married to a Navy officer who is about to become a civilian spouse. Each interviewee was assured that the conversation was being recorded for purposes of accuracy, and that no data traceable to the individual would be used.

The interview questions were both closed and open-ended, to allow subjects to openly discuss any experience he or she felt was related to the issue addressed. The responses given by the interviewees sometimes prompted the researcher to use probing questions to further clarify exactly what points were being expressed. The additional questions, as a result of responses in earlier interviews, often became part of the base questions in later interviews. This was done without any intention to influence subjects' answers, but rather to acquire different perspectives on the individuals' circumstances and decision making processes.

The 1992 DoD Survey of Military Spouses and theoretical research into issues confronting mobile spouses served as the basis for developing the interview questions. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix D. The goal of the researcher was not to interview a random probability sample of all female Navy and Marine Corps officers married to civilian spouses. Only 32 couples were interviewed to determine whether or not the underlying themes or trends matched those found in the 1992 DoD Survey, and to provide insight into areas not covered by that survey.

B. DATA ANALYSIS AND THEME DEVELOPMENT

The data were compiled by question—separately for officers and spouses—and then analyzed through the use of content analysis to identify trends and recurring issues related to career and family decisions. The data from similar questions were then grouped together and compared and contrasted across spouse type (employed, homemaker, primary care-giver and veteran status).

Themes were then developed by analyzing the data groupings of recurring issues and determining the underlying points made by the interviewees. Themes are grouped into three broad categories—officer, spouse and couple—based on which interview responses were used in the analysis. These 25 themes (See Appendix E) are presented in Chapter V and are reinforced with quotations that exemplify the opinions and experiences of the officers and spouses interviewed. Since only four Marine couples were interviewed, no attempt is made to compare and contrast themes across service lines.

V. ANALYSIS

A. OVERVIEW

Analysis of the interview transcripts yielded 25 general themes. These themes are presented along with supporting interview excerpts and are organized into four groups. The first eight themes are taken from the officer interviews. The next 12 themes are derived from the responses of the spouses. The final five themes are couple-oriented and are taken from both the officers' and spouses' responses. In some instances, the partners' responses to similar questions are compared and contrasted to show differences in perceptions. In many cases, the themes only relate to a particular sub-group of the sample—employed, stay-at-home care-giver, or military veterans—of interviewees, in which case the underlying relationship is noted. The final section of this chapter presents interviewee recommendations regarding ways the Navy could provide new avenues of spouse support.

B. OFFICER THEMES

The following eight themes were taken directly from responses given by the officers interviewed. The first theme is demographic in nature. The next two concern the officers' retention and billet selection decisions. The fourth and fifth observations address whether male spouses are expected and/or capable of filling the "traditional" roles often assumed by the civilian wife in the past. The next two themes in this group center around the officers' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of marriage to a civilian husband. The final theme addresses the officers' perceptions of how current Navy policies and common practices discriminate against women married to civilians.

1. Most Officers Are Married to Older Men

This theme was derived directly from demographic data collected during the interviews. Of the officers in the sample, 69 percent (22 of 32) were married to men older than themselves. Age differences spanned from one to 16 years. On average, the spouse was five years older than the officer. Twelve of the husbands were five or more years older than their wives. Although individuals do not consciously choose their mates based upon their age, there seems to be an advantage when one partner is several years older. Specifically, the degree of career conflict encountered over time is reduced. A Lieutenant Commander [31]* with 17 years of service (YOS) and married to a retired Navy officer, spoke about this advantage and her husband's plans for the future:

> Since he was quite a bit senior, we didn't hit the hard jobs at the same time so we didn't really have a problem. Whereas, I know couples who start off at the same peer level and it's harder for them, but he was always ahead of me.... My husband's goal is to have his own business after he gets this training, as an independent contractor or consultant doing his own thing because it's flexible, and he can go anywhere he wants and then we will have two retirement checks after I retire.

Another Lieutenant [5] whose husband is 16 years her senior described their situation:

> Our situation is kind of interesting because he's older than I am, he's senior to me, he's done a lot of those career wickets...things that we [and the author] are going through right now...get this block checked, this block checked...so, in some ways it's better that he's older because he's not also struggling to establish himself. I think that's what I'm trying to get at, that he's established himself.

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* Each interviewee in the sample was assigned an alphanumeric code– letters for spouses, numbers for officers– for cross-referencing purposes during compilation of the thesis in order to ensure confidentiality of individual responses.

When asked what he would do if a conflict arose between their careers, this officer's spouse responded:

> I would give up my job. I have an advantage in that I'm on the downward slope of my career, so I can retire in the next year or so if I choose early retirement. I have that advantage. I think most couples don't.

In seven cases where the spouse was older than the officer, he was also retired from the military. This financial advantage provides these spouses the flexibility and patience to follow their military wives until they are eligible for retirement. Three spouses spoke about their decisions to retire from the military.

An ex-submariner [B], who left after 24 YOS, emphasized the flexibility the couple gained when he retired:

> Our careers were intertwined when I was in the Navy, and her career was a large part of the decision to finish my Navy career. I don't know if I would say it interfered. And right now, after I retired, I clearly made the decision that I wasn't going to go to work because that is why I retired from the Navy. If I went to work for someone around D.C. where I retired, then I would have lost all the flexibility that I had gained by retiring.

A retired Marine officer [R] shared his perspective:

> I was much closer to retirement, she is five or six years behind me. It was the most logical thing to do. Her career had more potential than mine since I was as far as I could go in my field.

A retired Air Force officer [Y] married to a Navy Lieutenant responded:

> It was a matter of several things. We had been separated for a little over a year when I made the decision. The Air Force was offering early retirement, which was how I managed to get out at 16. And then I got passed over once for O-5[was not promoted]. Even though I had a lot of senior backing to make sure I got selected next time, there was no guarantee.

A fourth spouse [F], who is 16 years older than his wife and nearing retirement, had the option of giving up his commercial business in order to follow his wife to her next duty station. When asked if his wife's military career interfered with his job he responded:

> Not at all, having to sell my business is actually an improvement. It allows me the ability to cut out all the tedious portions of my current livelihood, and keep the best part when I start over at the new location. I will be going from having a tremendous amount of work, to the status of working retirement.

A Lieutenant Commander [3], who is eight years younger than her retired Navy husband, summed it up nicely:

> Life has been pretty good since he's been retired. It makes it a lot simpler, but that's also a financial edge that a lot of people don't have because he's got his retirement.

2. Most Officers Plan to Stay Until Retirement

Only five officers—one Marine and four Navy—did not plan to stay for a complete military career. One Navy Lieutenant [2] failed to be promoted and was being involuntarily separated. A Marine Captain [23] and another Navy Lieutenant [4] intended to resign to raise a family. A Lieutenant [26] planned to leave at the end of her obligated service to live with her spouse who is tied geographically to his business. Another Lieutenant [13] recently came to the realization that the Navy is a poor person-organization fit for her.

The officers represented a wide range of experience and seniority. Seven interviewees had obligated service that would extend them until retirement eligibility, or they were already beyond the 20-year point in their careers. However, the officers also

gave several reasons that might cause them to change their mind and resign. The top three reasons given and their frequencies included:

1. Involuntary separation—9
2. An unaccompanied assignment or family separation—5
3. Inability to balance family and career—4

Only two officers responded that a conflict with their spouse's career would cause them to resign their commission.

Several officers mentioned that they have agreements with their spouses that he will put his career ambitions on hold and follow the officer until retirement. A Marine Captain [22], whose husband cares for their baby daughter, explained the couple's motivation:

> Right now I plan on it [staying for 20]. That is because that was the plan when I decided to accept these orders and come here. I knew I would have a 4-year pay back and that would put me over 13 years. So, at that point we kind of look at retirement as either a vacation fund or health care.... Yet, I have my days where, if they are going to send me unaccompanied to Okinawa or something like, then we'll analyze it and decide if it is really worth it, because that would be pretty tough.

A surface warfare officer [9], married five years, spoke about what would happen if her career ever conflicted with her husband's career:

> He would give up his job. We have this deal that we made when we got married. Then, after I retire, we will return to Minnesota where he is from and all his family live. He said he would follow me anywhere I go in the military, if he could, unless I was sent unaccompanied.

3. Spouse Employment Concerns and Preferences Are a Key Influence in the Officers' Assignment Decisions

In nearly every situation where the spouse was a member of the labor force, the officer thought it was necessary to consider her husband's career opportunities in the

reassignment process. Duty station location and tour length were the two biggest factors in the officer's selection of assignment. Those officers whose spouse was either a student or stay-at-home care-giver generally reported more freedom in accepting assignments based on their own personal and career priorities.

In 1996, 53 percent of all married couples in the U.S. were dual-income families. Additionally, both parents were employed in 64 percent of married-couple families with children under 18 years of age. The proportion of "traditional" families in which only the husband is employed was 19 percent. The proportion of "non-traditional" families—where only the wife is employed—was just five percent. [Ref. 11]

In comparison, the interview sample was comprised of 20 dual-earner couples—or 63 percent of the total. In two cases, the spouse was a full-time student. The remaining ten arrangements (31 percent of the sample) were "non-traditional," in that the husband was unemployed, filling the homemaker role. Four of these homemakers were also part-time students. In comparison with society as a whole, the sample had a much larger proportion of non-traditional employment patterns—38 percent, compared with 5 percent. There were also more dual-earner couples represented in the sample. Thus, it is not surprising that these officers were considering their husband's career prospects, as well as their own, in selecting future assignments. Although three spouses were civil service (GS) employees at one time, most were now employed in the civilian business sector. One officer [6] described how her duty location affects her husband's employment opportunities:

> He works in the construction field. I've considered the impact of different locations on his ability to work. It was a big factor in my first move, because he specialized in the area of new construction. In the second

move, it was not such a big factor because he had branched out into remodeling as well, which opened up more opportunities for him.

A Commander [10], married for nine years, had this to say:

> Yes, location is always a consideration. It isn't that I've tried to go someplace because he wanted to go there. They [detailers] usually offer me a few options and then we talk about which is the best place for him to be employed, and we go from there. As long as the job is good for me, we try to look after him too. I would have to admit, I've made a career but made some personal sacrifices to do it. Like, if it was a really good job and a crummy place to live, I might choose a nicer place to live and take a crummy job.

Four officers were fortunate to find sequential jobs in the same geographical location to avoid displacing their husbands from a current place of employment. A fleet support officer [1] with eight YOS admitted that "it was important for me to find the right job without uprooting him if possible." One Lieutenant [4] had graduated from NPS and become married in the past year. She accepted a billet at the school because her husband had a job in Monterey.

Another student [5], whose spouse is employed in northern California, commented on her thought process in selecting an assignment after graduation from NPS:

> So that he can stay in his current job, I decided to find a location in California, preferably near where he's at, which led me to recruiting and Naval Recruiting District San Francisco.

One Lieutenant [13] had this to say about her motivation for staying in Monterey:

> One of the big factors that weighed in my taking a follow-on job at NPS was so that he wouldn't have to leave his job, because it ended up that he got a really good job here. If he had been floundering in the job market or going to school, I probably would have gone somewhere else. That would have weighed in and I wouldn't have been so hell bent on getting a job here on staff.

A few officers mentioned their wariness in accepting orders that would take them overseas. They were concerned about the effect it might have on their spouse's employment prospects and their general satisfaction. A Lieutenant Commander [3], married seven years, stated that her husband preferred to remain in the United States:

> I wouldn't say his job because his job is to stay home with the kids, but certainly his preferences have influenced. We were just preparing to possibly go to Europe and this opportunity came up that I knew would be better for my career, but I also knew he would rather stay in the States than go to Europe.

A Major [19] with 13 YOS responded:

> Yes, in going to Japan. He wants to follow in my footsteps, to come and go for my 20, and then we will live where he wants to live. And we will both choose it together, of course. And then his job will take priority. But in the meantime he's got to build experience and I want him to be happy too. So, okay, with his type of job he couldn't have gotten a position overseas. So I took the one-year tour rather than the three-year. And even now there is an interesting tour available overseas that I would like to take, but I can't because I need to keep him happy too.

One officer [13], married to a foreign national, was concerned about her husband's ability to assimilate into American culture after their marriage:

> We got married during my first tour in the Philippines. Recognizing that he is a foreign national, I was very concerned that my next tour would put us in a place that he would be able to assimilate into American culture more easily, and I remember being offered a job in the Azores or in New Mexico. And, I remember thinking to myself that I might like to do that, it sounds like a neat job, but I don't think my husband, as a Filipino, is going to assimilate well in New Mexico. The third option was a job in Philadelphia, and I thought, "Philadelphia, big city, lot of culture, lot of diversity, probably fairly easy for him to get some sort of job." So I took that job for that reason. And it turned out to be the right thing to do for those reasons.

A chaplain [17], whose TC spouse is self-employed, was more concerned about caring for their elderly parents than her husband's job:*

> I was originally assigned to an East Coast ship and I said, "Please, please, please can you put me on the West Coast? I'll take anything on the West Coast." And they shifted me to the West Coast. And I've worked very hard to stay close—not only his job, but his mom lives across the way. So it's job and family. He's responsible for his mother and I'm responsible for my mother, so both of us have that thing that keeps us close to the Bay area.

4. Most Officers Do Not Think Their Husbands Need To Fill A Supportive Role to Further Their [the Officer's] Career

Interviewees were questioned whether they had ever thought it necessary for their husband to volunteer or participate in certain social events that might help their [the officer's] career. Only a third of the officers (11 of 32) answered positively. Most of these officers stressed the importance of their husband's presence at command functions such as the "Hail and Farewell." One Lieutenant [9] also thought it beneficial for her partner to participate in the local spouse club:

> Yes, onboard ships the wardroom [collection of officers assigned] is smaller and they have a lot of wardroom events and functions. So, when I'm deployed he's been involved in the spouse's club. Politically, it helps a lot because the captain's spouse likes him and if something happens, because he's one of the few males there, if they need help with the car or something, he's there. The men on the ship feel better that he's there because he can probably help their wives if something goes wrong. So, I kind of push for him to get involved with that. If I don't bring him to a function, I get asked where he is, why isn't he here, because the wardroom is so small.

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* The abbreviation TC, or "true civilian," refers to the subset of civilian spouses who have never served in the military.

A medical service corps officer [7] talked about the importance of perceptions in her community:

> I think in my community, which is a small community—I generally work in hospitals. I think it is important for any officer to be active in social activities, whether it's the wardroom or volunteer functions. If you have the support of your spouse, all the more, so the better. Perception is everything. It doesn't matter what level of the ladder you are on.

A Lieutenant Commander [11] in the fleet support community agreed:

> Absolutely, events such as wardroom Hail and Farewells, Navy Balls, and other command-sponsored activities. Every function, they expect him to be there. It contributes to a perception of stability, which reassures superiors.

A Commander [10] and Admiral [14], who had both filled command positions, differed in their opinion regarding the effect of their spouse's involvement on their career. The Admiral [14] believed her partner's involvement played a key role in her success:

> Yes, I believe that I couldn't have gone as far in my career without his constant support and willingness to play the supportive role. He has done all the typical things that a commander's wife is expected to do—volunteering with various charitable and social work organizations, hosting parties, etc. Being involved and, in some cases, the president of the spouse club.

The Commander [10] had this to say:

> Yes. Pretty much it's social functions. I don't think I should be going stag to various social functions that he just doesn't come with me. When he was a CO's spouse, all those traditional things, no way...his personality...and I don't know, even for me, it always boggled my mind that when you had a male CO, his wife was expected to do all this stuff and she didn't get paid. It just didn't make sense to me. I think it's antiquated. Since he was a male spouse, there were mixed expectations. I think there were expectations that as a CO's spouse he should do something...but he's a male, so we really can't ask him. With his job, he just wasn't around...and he doesn't bake cookies. He doesn't console people and make them feel better. So, I don't think his absence in this role affected my career or performance in any way.

Several officers stated that they had felt some pressure to have their husbands participate in social events; however, they had chosen to disregard it. Most officers simply enjoyed having their husband's company at wardroom gatherings. One chaplain [17] spoke about her experience:

> There have been those pressures, but we have chosen not to subject ourselves to it. On the principle that those pressures are technically illegal and just not that important, but priorities are.... I mean, he likes to go to the parties, but if his work conflicts or something like that, there is a higher priority. And chaplains can do some pretty stupid things, make some horrible threats. Yeah, chaplains can be just as bad or vindictive as anyone else. Actually they are much worse, they do it in a sanctimonious voice!

Another officer [3], serving on a flag staff, thought spouse participation was dependent upon the job the officer held:

> You know, I think early on in my career I would have felt strongly that that probably would be true. But now, I just don't see that many.... Okay, in a job like this there are a few more social requirements and yes, I think it is more important, but I think it really is job dependent, than in the Navy as a whole. I wouldn't say career-wise, as a whole, that I feel that his participation is required.

A Lieutenant Commander [24] with 14 YOS replied:

> Let's say to further my career, no. Maybe it's true, he has come to the parties, probably not really happy to do it but, yeah, because he's ex-military, he understands the games. When we were overseas, we were an hour apart, and he did not come to my functions, and I did not attend his functions. As I move up the ladder, I would say that it is important that people know that he's there. When I'm XO and CO, there will be functions that he will come to. But I'm not sure in today's Navy that your career will suffer if your spouse is not an Ombudsman or attending spouses clubs. I think that people aren't surprised that my husband is working and not available, or just not interested in the spouse association. So, I think there is probably less expectation that the men be involved in those types of functions.

A fleet support officer [32], whose husband recently left the Navy, added her opinion regarding this issue:

> I don't have that perception that I require social activities to enhance my career. When there is a social activity, 99 percent of the time I would go anyway and my husband is the same way. If he doesn't feel like coming, which is rare, he doesn't go. If I was more senior, I don't have to worry about him fulfilling any special spouse roles, because I think he would do it anyway. That's just the type of person he is. Again, I don't think that's a woman, god-given-gift that they have. I simply think that men and women have qualities in them that maybe just have never come out, maybe that's one of them. My husband would probably jump in there. And, it wouldn't necessarily be a spouses club or be one of those sort of things. He's definitely proactive in reaching out to people. I would talk to him about it if I thought there was a need for him to fill a role, and he would say, "Yeah I think I could fill that role. I'm prior military, I know how things work and I could be a great help to those spouses who stay at home." That's probably how he would get involved. But I would never expect that of him, only because I know how he would respond. Yes, I think the institution still expects spouses of senior individuals to be involved.

A few officers thought that their husband's presence at social functions might actually be detrimental to their career. Others admitted that their husband would not participate even if they felt it was necessary. For instance, a Marine Major [19] laughed as she responded:

> No, not really. I mean, he can if he wants to. He really enjoys it. In fact, I don't think it would help me, it might even hurt my career! He's so vocal now! I say to him, "Honey, why don't you stay home for this one?" He might tell someone they are too fat to be in the military.... Sometimes he's very good. Other times I have to say, "Come to me, no, no, now be good!"

Analysis across officer communities was not undertaken because of the small size of the sample. However, a majority of officers married to former enlisted members (5 of 8), as well as their partners, answered negatively that they felt pressure to volunteer. This

may be partly due to a feeling of uneasiness in social interactions between husbands who were enlisted personnel and officers [and officer wives]. For example, one ex-sailor [D] of 13 years described the awkwardness of interacting socially with his wife's coworkers:

> No, I haven't. Maybe that's because I am ex-enlisted and I have no desire to. I'm sure that will become an issue when she becomes an XO or CO—making sure I go to all the functions and the other little things. But we'll cross that bridge when we get to it. Hopefully, by then, I will learn to bite my tongue when I'm talking to someone more senior. I avoided a lot of the officer functions in the past because it was the same system I used to be in, and I thought that would have been awkward, where I was an enlisted and she was an officer. Now we're together, and I have to interact with these people differently than I ever had to interact with them before. And I thought it would be more awkward for them than it would be for me, because they would think, "I used to be in charge of this guy and now here he is...."

A Lieutenant [16], whose husband is a former enlistee, had this to say:

> No, I don't feel there is and he doesn't. I have a hard enough time just getting him to go to "Hail and Farewells" with me. He's prior military and he just doesn't like to associate at all. He wouldn't do it anyway. He's very stubborn.

A majority of the husbands' responses were similar to that of their partner. Only eight husbands said they felt pressure to fill a supporting role. Most of these men expected to be involved in social functions even though they did not feel any real pressure to participate. Usually, these men had military backgrounds that influenced their perceptions. For example, an ex-Army soldier [V] responded:

> Yes, in the Washington area everything is political. Not so much in other areas. It is important that I attend parties and special events to help her career. I try to stay in the mainstream with friends and coworkers.

An ex-sailor [X], married to a surface warfare officer, shared his experiences as a member of the officer's spouse club:

> When she's onboard a ship, and if the captain's wife asks me to go out to lunch or something, I do it. I don't really feel a lot of pressure. I think it's the camaraderie of the spouses' club. I was involved in two of her ship's spouse clubs. I was the token male, at least the only one who showed up. We [men] were treated equal, everyone was equal. At first, she was an Ensign and I had just gotten out a few years ago, and it was a hard transition going from being enlisted to being a part of the wardroom. I got used to it after awhile, but at first, yes, it was uncomfortable.

Another spouse [AA], who left the Royal Air Force to follow his wife back to the States, had the following perception:

> Yes, there is a certain amount of pressure, especially at more senior commands with higher ranking officers present. Her seniors see her in a better light if I'm involved in her command functions. I was the ombudsman when she was stationed overseas.

An ex-Air Force officer [Y], who had served as the first male president of an aircraft carrier wives' club, had this to say about volunteering:

> I was the president of the Lincoln's spouse club. I will participate in that sort of thing, but there's no pressure to do so. And here I've been working so much...but I work with a few organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity, and I work with the chapel here. So with work, I really don't have a lot of time.

A retired Navy corpsman [Z] had this to say about his participation:

> Yes, in spouse clubs and parties. Not a negative sort of pressure. As a presence...I think that people who are married tend to be better accepted in the military and in business and the world as a whole. More viable part...I was single until I was 36, and I know that single people get left out of some things.

A few of the husbands interviewed were concerned that they had not filled the traditional supporting spouse role in the past. One TC husband [W] commented about his experience as the spouse of a commanding officer:

> I felt some pressure when she was slated to be a CO-equivalent. During that time, I went to a spouse orientation at which I was the only male... and the whole time my wife is saying, "You know, you really need to do

> this and be on your best behavior (laugh)." I was expected to be a little more proper and formal than I was used to.... But that wasn't typical of most places we have been, especially here and probably not in the future. There was a slight hint of that in the past with functions, and they usually wound up being a fairly good time anyway so,...going to a party and meeting the CO's spouse, that's normal. When she was the CO, I really didn't do anything...what I was supposed to, I guess. It's just really not my cup of tea, but maybe that will be an issue in the future. If so, I'll play along.

Another retired Navy spouse [I] thought someone else would fill the nurturing role at the command if his wife were assigned to a leadership position in the future:

> That might be a drawback for her once she becomes a CO or XO, because there has been in the past, the traditional captain's wife's roles, but I can't see myself doing that. Not so much because I don't want to, because I don't, but if I were even to try, I think it could have unintended consequences that neither one of us ever imagined. But I think that is changing. Twenty years ago the captain's wife pretty much had a job she had to do, but I don't think that is the case anymore. Plus, I think if the CO is a woman, she can do more of the supporting role, since women are more empathetic with people, or the XO's wife or the master chief's wife can fill that nurturing role for the command.

A retired Marine officer [R] talked about his fears for the future:

> I haven't felt any pressure so far. She hasn't been in a command position yet. Then that might change. That's one of my fears.

Another husband [T], who was part of an inter-racial marriage, felt uncomfortable participating in social events. He and his wife had not been treated very well in the past by the officer's superiors and peers. He shared:

> Yes, social functions early on, such as the Navy Day Ball, but I hesitate to go because I have a different culture than most of the couples who are attending the ball. And, in my case, I'm the husband and my culture is different from most of the guys. There aren't many of them from the same culture married to a white female. So, I'm not really comfortable doing this... but I try to do my best. I try to support her and get involved in things like wardroom events. But, big social functions, I leave to her.

5. Officers Believe Their Husbands Are Capable of Fulfilling the Nurturing Role for Children in Their Absence

The vast majority of officers (15 of 17) believed that their husbands were very capable of meeting the emotional needs of their children. Very few of these couples had children during past periods of separation. Only six officers could speak about instances when they had to leave a child in the sole care of the father while they were away on a military assignment. Each one was completely satisfied with the care given to the children in her absence and would not hesitate to leave the children in their father's care in the future should the need arise. A Marine Major [15] recounted a funny story that happened to her husband while she was away for a few months:

> He burned some burner covers (laugh). He did a good job, he does a really good job. He left Sara behind one day. She went back into the house when he was putting the kids and their stuff in the car. She sits in the jump seat behind him in the truck, and he went in the house to grab something, and while he was in there, she went back into the house to get her blanket or something that was really important for a three-year-old. So, he got into the truck and drove off, since he couldn't see her in the jump seat. And he was down about a mile from the house, and I think Chris might have said something, "We don't have Sara…", or he asked her a question and she didn't answer. So, he did a U-turn at an intersection and got stopped by the police. And he said, "I've got to get home, my daughter is at home alone and she's only three." The policewoman was sympathetic and wound up letting him go. He walked into the house, and poor Sara was sitting in the house on the stairs in tears, absolutely in tears, because she had been abandoned. And she still remembers it, oh yeah. So, I think otherwise he did a really good job. He thought he had her and that he had done everything right. She still says, four years later, "Remember when daddy left me behind?"

Officers whose husbands ordinarily cared for their children were the most confident of their spouse's capabilities in this area. A few interviewees mentioned that

maintaining a routine for the children was important. A Lieutenant [2], who left her children in their father's care for three months, answered:

> Yes, because we didn't disrupt the kid's routine. They still went to the baby-sitter during the day like usual. The only difference was that I wasn't there in the evenings when they came home.

Similarly, a Marine Captain [23] had this to say:

> Yes, however, some guys might have a hard time. But, he has been home with her since she was born seven months ago, so I don't have any concerns there. But, I've seen some guys that I would be concerned about. He has grown into the position of care-giver.

Another Marine [22], whose spouse is a stay-at-home dad, responded:

> He could definitely meet the children's emotional needs. There are a lot of men who completely raise their own children and do a fantastic job. I guess it depends on the guy. I guess there are some who just aren't that interested in children and maybe wouldn't do as good a job.

Only two of the mothers were unsure of how their husband would cope if left alone with their kids. A Commander [10] said the following:

> They weren't with him for this reason. His job, his hours, and focus precluded them from staying with him. His focus is on his job when he's working, everything else enters into his focus as the job permits. So if the kids were with him, they would have gotten left somewhere or something. They would have fallen through and he wouldn't have been there.

A Lieutenant Commander [31] married nine years with three kids responded:

> Well, I don't know, that's interesting. I've been in negotiations with the detailer and what they were offering me is a sea-going staff billet where I would deploy for two months at a time. Now, he never actually said he didn't want me to go away for two months, but I know why he didn't think that was a good idea for me, is because it would be too much for him. He also knows since he's retired he hasn't been alone with the three of them. But the one week TAD [Temporary Duty Assignment] or something, he can do it. He's got the routine down. The house is going to look like hell, though, when I get home.

One officer [32] commented about the effect her absence might have on their two boys if left in their father's care:

> Yes, I think he's a very good father. But he's a little more perfunctory in what he does than I am. He's more of the disciplinarian, he's more tough and regimented. Have dinner at this time each day.... He's very sensitive, but I know they would miss out on the little things that I would do. But, overall, I don't think they would be negatively impacted, with the exception of missing me. I think he would do very well if I was away. And, I also have a family support structure that would probably jump in at that point and come in and help out.

She went on to address what she perceived as a flaw in society's gender-role stereotypes:

> I think men are seriously underestimated in their capability at parenting. I don't think it's a mutually exclusive process that is divinely endowed upon women. It may be something we've assumed and taken on because we didn't have anything else to do. But I think, when people are forced to branch out, the better part of them comes out, and I just have no problem with not being able to do it.

6. Officers Find it More Advantageous Having a Civilian Spouse, Especially if He Served in the Military

Most military women are married to husbands with some military experience. This is not a coincidence. In fact, nearly every officer interviewed (29 of 32) mentioned the importance of their spouse having a military background, even if he did not. All but one officer (6 of 7) married to a "true civilian" thought they were at a disadvantage because their spouse did not have this shared background.

The interviewees gave 15 different reasons why they felt it was more advantageous to have a civilian spouse as compared with being married to another military member. Seventy-five percent (24 of 32) of these officers had both perspectives upon which to base their opinions. The top five advantages given and their frequencies were:

1. No need to coordinate moves and traveling (e.g., co-location)—17
2. No competition between two military careers—13
3. Provides a broader perspective on life—10
4. Provides stability and more time for children—10
5. Provides more flexibility in job selection—9

Most officers whose husbands had served in the military were relieved that they no longer had to worry about co-locating duty assignments with their spouse. With the exception of three officers married to TC spouses, all the interviewees who gave this reason were once part of a dual-military couple. One officer [3] told a story about a harrowing experience she had when her spouse was still on active-duty. She now thought the ultimate arrangement is one in which the spouse is unemployed:

> I've come to believe, I really have, that it's just best to have only one person on active duty at a time because of all the moves, the separations, and the traveling, and stuff like that because it just gets too hard. My daughter got pneumonia in the middle of the night, and I'm in Maryland, and my husband is in Texas, and I get the call from the baby-sitter...so, I'm driving home in the middle of the night, half out of my mind, thinking, "Oh my god!" And I swear I'm never going to do that again. So, I tell my husband, either you retire or I'm getting out. Life has been pretty good since he's been retired. It makes it a lot simpler, but that's also a financial edge that a lot of people don't have because he's got his retirement.

A Lieutenant [8], who was married to an Air Force officer for three years before he retired, thought it was too difficult to co-locate with someone from another service:

> We got married and then I immediately got deployed. I got back six months later, and he traveled a lot with his job, so he was always gone. Spouse co-location was a real problem. I went to California, and he went to Korea. The detailers made absolutely no effort to deal with that. So, we followed our own career paths to opposite continents! You don't have to deal with that with a civilian spouse, because he made that choice when he took early retirement, that he was going to follow me around and not have to deal with this.

One Navy officer [18] felt that her prior marriage failed due to the constant separation. She liked the fact that her current spouse had more flexibility. She explained her perspective on the military's attempts to co-locate partners:

> An advantage for the civilian spouse is that he can quit, move, and start over again. When both are in the military, the military has reigns over you that tell you where to move, and they might say, "Sorry, we can't co-locate you. The best we can do is get you a job three hours away." It's just too hard on a marriage because you can't grow and move forward. You must work extra hard to even stay at the same level of intimacy. The military is warped in their practice of thinking that it is okay for dual-military couples to be separated. You can't work out your problems together, and you are forced to find other friends to take up the slack.

The hassles of trying to coordinate two Navy careers eventually led to one husband's decision to leave the military in the middle of his career. His wife [24], a fleet support officer, explained:

> He was under 10 years when he got out. I think if he had made it one more tour we would probably have stuck it out until retirement. But, I think he had nine years in upon separation. He was a cryptologist. That was part of it, he was at the point where his next duty would have been on a flag ship, and he would have been gone.

It is noteworthy that two officers, who never personally experienced the difficulty of co-location in the military, still had the same perspective on its feasibility. A Lieutenant [13] said she purposely avoided marrying someone in the military:

> It was always in my mind that, when I got married, it wasn't going to be to another military guy because of the complications of co-location. It didn't make sense to me. I avoided dating any guys in the military because I didn't want to be wrapped up in that difficulty. Both of you going in different career directions and still having the constraint of being told where to go. That is a huge disadvantage.

Similarly, a Navy chaplain [17] responded from her experience counseling service members:

> I think, for convenience, it is probably easier to be married to a civilian, despite military co-location. I have never found military co-location to work very effectively. Most of the people that I know who have been dealing with military co-location struggle as equally as we do, or more so, because their restrictions are greater. And, even when they get to a location, they have duty and deployments and they can't get them coordinated. I mean, he's got duty for one week and then she's got duty for the next week, and flip flop, and they don't see each other for six months, and they are in the same house! Co-location doesn't mean a thing if you don't see them. I think it is a little easier being married to a civilian.

Related closely to the issue of coordinating two careers is the issue of competing careers. According to a Marine Major [19], married to an ex-Marine officer, this is especially difficult when both are in the same service and pay grade:

> We're not competing in the Marine Corps. If we were, we would be the same rank. And I don't think we intentionally would compete with one another, but we are both very competitive, and that may be a problem.

A Navy Commander [10], with 16 YOS and married to a TC spouse, agreed:

> We don't have a direct conflict with competing careers between spouses, since his job is able to follow me as opposed to getting transferred to different places.

A Navy nurse [21], whose husband is a homemaker, thought it unlikely that the military would find career-enhancing jobs for both spouses in a dual-military situation. She thought it an advantage that her career did not have to "take the back seat" to her husband's job:

> I think the main issue is that, when it's time for orders, you don't have to look at what is best for both careers. Although we don't have that civilian job, I think that would add extra difficulty to it since my perspective is that the military is not as likely to work as hard to look after what is best for both careers. Probably, one has to be subordinate to the other and decisions have to be made. In our case, we looked at the options to see which was best for my career, best for family life, and opportunities for him, in that order.

Ten officers mentioned that they had a broader perspective about life than they would if they were married to another active-duty member. One Marine [19] described how her civilian husband helps her in this area:

> He's grown now that he's out of the military. He's not so narrow-focused. And, he pulls me out of it sometimes, and I benefit a lot from that, because he makes me see the big picture, rather than our narrow little focused tunnel. I'm glad he's out, you know.

A Lieutenant [5] stressed the importance of having this outside perspective:

> I think one advantage is the outside perspective, because he's not being caught up in the whole culture. He can stand outside and see what's going on. And then, with his situation, since he's prior military, he can still click into the buzz words, and click into the routine, and understand when I had to get up at four o'clock in the morning at my last command, and about watch, and why I wasn't coming home. But, it's still having that broader perspective, so that you don't have to live and breathe the Navy. So, that is an advantage, because it keeps you grounded with what the world is doing.

Another Marine [15], whose spouse is retired, put it this way:

> We're not so wrapped up in the military. I know I have to do certain things, and when he was in, he had to do certain things. So, instead of the double stressor, there is only one for the military member, if she has a good marriage.

A Navy Lieutenant [16] saw their situation as mutually beneficial:

> He's been able to learn from me and I've been able to learn from him. He's going out and doing different things—he's getting his MBA and will be going out getting different jobs. He's keeping me aware of things I should probably know already, and that's very useful.

Fifty percent of the officers who have children (10 of 20) commented that a civilian spouse has more time available to spend with the children. Seven of these spouses were primarily stay-at-home care-givers; two spouses worked out of the home; and one was a full-time student. Several officers were happy that they did not have to

rely on commercial daycare. One Captain [22] revealed that the fear of her and her spouse being deployed at the same time contributed to his decision to leave the Marine Corps:

> The big advantage, and the main reason we did this, is that, knowing we were going to have kids, we didn't want the fear of both of us deploying and going to war at the same time. Neither one of us felt comfortable with the whole child-care plan of saying, if we both got called up right now, this is where our child would go in the next eight hours or something like that.

A Lieutenant [16] thought her young son benefited from spending time with his father, rather than being put into daycare:

> It's been great, because my husband really hasn't had a job and that really is quite amazing, but, because he stays home with our son, he has probably gotten better training and education than he would have gotten being in a daycare center all of the time. So, for us it's much better. There's just much more flexibility for us overall. At least for now, it allows him to spend much more time with our son. He comes from a big family, so the family is very important to him.

Another officer [24] felt secure knowing her husband is available for the children in an emergency because he works out of the home:

> I like it having him home. My one son comes home from school and my husband is there. Although, the boy is pretty independent at this point, but if anything happens, he's there. Although that might be a disadvantage from my husband's point of view, not necessarily from my point of view, that he sometimes feels used because he's there and I'll say, "Can you take them to a doctors appointment?" and, he will say "Whatever."

Similarly, a Lieutenant [28] and mother of three, thought it an advantage that her husband had the time to be involved with their children's education, now that he was no longer on active-duty:

> It's nice that he's not working, since we have kids. He can pick them up from school. He has time to be more involved with their school. I like that a lot. Him being a civilian and not in the military is definitely better.

Many officers thought one advantage to their situation was that it allowed them more flexibility in choosing their military assignments. Several officers also mentioned that, as a civilian, their husband also has more flexibility in his job opportunities. One Navy cryptologist [25] used her husband's lack of military experience to improve her career:

> For sure, I have more flexibility with assignments. Not just location, but the difficulty. You know, sea duty or whatever, I'm not constrained. I figure that would be a lot harder to work out, because I've seen dual-military, and most of the time, one of their careers has to take a back seat. And, it's not always the woman's career, from what I've seen. I feel the more successful officer is usually the one to take the front seat. Actually, for a long time this was an advantage for me, because he believed what I would say. He couldn't believe the military kept sending me on these really hard assignments. It took him awhile to figure out that it's not the Navy, it's just me volunteering to take them!

Similarly, a nurse corps officer [21] thought she was able to be as competitive as her male counterparts because she was free to take training assignments at a moment's notice, without worrying about who would watch her children while she was away. This officer had actually resigned her commission after getting married, so her husband could pursue his career. Then, after evaluating the alternatives, she returned to active-duty and her husband became a full-time care-giver and homemaker:

> When I made the decision to come back, he agreed to stay home with the kids, so I could go to work and not have to worry if the kids were sick, or didn't feel like going to school, or if there was an emergency, or if I went TAD somewhere or was deployed. I could do all those things and not have to worry what would happen to the kids. His agreement was that, as long as I wouldn't be sad that I wasn't the one who was at home, then he could do that. So, that took a weight off of my shoulders. I was able to get several training TDYs [Temporary Duty Assignments] because I was free to go at any time, and could give a positive response faster than anyone else.

Another officer [32] stressed the flexibility her husband had gained since leaving the Navy:

> There is more flexibility in what kind of job he can take. His flexibility to move with me. Before, we were pretty much restricted to a few geographic areas if we wanted to be co-located, which on his end, hurt his career, and on my end, hurt my career too. So, I guess what's improved is flexibility. And, the ability to spend more time with our family.

Several other advantages were given by interviewees in addition to the five mentioned. Nine officers were glad that their spouse did not have to deploy, or commented that they would not have to endure family separation in the future unless they chose to live apart. Three officers mentioned that it was an advantage that their spouse could socialize with their male coworkers. One Lieutenant [6] explained how this helps her:

> He helps me relate to the other guys I have to work with due to his outgoing nature. They socialize with him, such as playing golf. This has a positive impact on my career, because they think my husband is real cool. Plus, he watches sports and then tells me about it, so I can talk intelligently with the guys I work with. He's also available to help other spouses who may be left behind when their husbands deploy or go TAD. He often does things for them around the house.

Similarly, a surface warfare officer [9] capitalized on the uniqueness of her situation:

> He has helped me in social settings, since it isn't normal to see a civilian male spouse. Others are interested in us as a couple, and in my husband and what he does. This helps people to remember us, because we're different. My ship's commanding officer told me he felt better knowing my husband was at home to help out the other spouses during deployment. My husband is an outgoing, happy-go-lucky sort of guy, that enjoys the attention of being the only guy in the wives' club.

Although the officers listed several advantages to their situation, they were all possible because, first and foremost, their husbands were more understanding of the inherent drawbacks of the mobile military lifestyle. In most instances, these couples had already experienced the difficulties encountered in a dual-military situation and found it much easier with only one spouse on active-duty.

7. Officers Report Few Disadvantages, Except in Cases Where the Husband Has No Previous Military Experience

A majority of the officers were very satisfied with their marital arrangements. In fact, almost a third (10 of 32) of the interviewees reported that they saw no disadvantage in having a civilian spouse. The prime reason for this response was highlighted in the previous theme—most spouses had prior military experience that helped them adjust to the military lifestyle. The remaining officers (22 of 32) gave one of several reasons why they felt that having a civilian spouse was disadvantageous. The top five disadvantages and their frequencies were:

1. Spouse's lack of military experience—7
2. No consideration for spouse's job constraints (e.g., no co-location)—6
3. Less pay and lower priority for daycare than dual-military—5
4. Loss of second income—3
5. Lack of peers for spouse at social functions—3

All seven officers married to a "true civilian" spouse considered their husband's lack of understanding of the military the number one disadvantage. Additionally, several officers whose husband had served in the military commented that they thought it would be more difficult for women whose spouse had no military experience. A surface warfare officer [30] stated, "Sometimes, since he has never been in the military, he doesn't

understand the stress of my job and what I'm going through." The following comments elaborate on this area.

A Navy chaplain [20] said her husband was at a disadvantage because:

> You really can't understand the military unless you are in it. I don't know, it's just really about not understanding the expectations and protocol required, and those types of things. But, I think at this point, that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. At least, in my community, there are a lot more people trying to stay in, than are trying to get out. So, it can't be too bad.

A Commander [10], married to her TC spouse for nine years, said:

> The disadvantage is the same if you are a guy in the military married to a female, in that often times, there's not an understanding of what you are doing, or how important your work is that you are doing. He has no military experience. I think a lot of times people get married to someone they hang out with in the military and then one gets out of the military. We are a different case.

Another Chaplain [17] shared her perspective about marriage to a TC:

> The only real disadvantage is the training curve or learning curve in terms of all the acronyms, and what things actually mean. And, just not really understanding what is entailed in sea duty, and all those kinds of things. But, that's real simple.

A Navy Lieutenant [13] gave several reasons why she felt at a disadvantage:

> The huge disadvantage being married to a civilian is that, you miss out on the other military experiences you would have if married to a guy in the military. As a fleet support officer, I haven't had the chance to meet other unrestricted line officers from a wide breadth of communities. If I were married to a military guy, I would have a whole other set of experience that he could share with me. Even if he was former military and became a civilian, he would still have those networks and friends. He would know what it takes to get promoted, and to overcome certain conflicts with this boss or that. He would have that whole common set of job experiences to share. Many times I come home and try to tell my husband what's going on at work, and he is clueless, and it's not just because of acronyms, but because he's just not aware. There are times when I can't talk to him about what's happening at work, such as when I was in communications…so we basically didn't talk about my job, because I had

> just decided it would be too difficult to decide what was okay to talk about, and what wasn't. And, that cuts you off, and denies a certain amount of intimacy with your spouse, when you can't even talk about your job.

A Naval Academy graduate [25] responded that her husband is at a disadvantage because his self-image suffers due to all the frequent moves:

> He doesn't understand why we move so much. Yet, he did grow up surrounded by Navy in Virginia, so he may have had some pre-conceived ideas of what the Navy was like, even though he was never on active-duty.

Another disadvantage, according to one officer [25], is dealing with the attitudes of some people who seem to question the marriage of a female officer to a former enlisted man or civilian. She explained:

> My husband was from Virginia Beach, which is how I met him, but people just want to think things that they don't know.... One of the things that kind of irritates me, is that for women who are married to prior enlisted men...there is the presumption that they married a sailor. I've had men come up to me and my husband and say, "So, were you prior enlisted? Where did she pick you up at?" There definitely is that presumption, that does come up every now and then. It's a shame that people are so narrow-minded to think that, or to think, "She's a woman in the military, why isn't she married to another military member?"

A Lieutenant [9], whose husband is a former enlistee, made it clear that she had not broken the Navy's fraternization policy, although some people assume otherwise:

> He got out before I got in. He was medically discharged because he had cancer. People tend to prejudge you when they hear that you are married to a former enlisted man. Your husband was enlisted and you're an officer—that's fraternization. No, I have to tell them that I was in college still, when he got out of the Navy, and then I was commissioned.

Six officers thought it was easier for dual-military couples because the military attempted to co-locate the spouses. However, they mentioned that the Navy refused to consider their husband's employment situation or constraints while in the assignment

process. One Lieutenant [2] argued that dual-military couples had an advantage because, "once you get over the initial hurdle of convincing the Navy to send you both to the same area, you are both assured of employment." Another Lieutenant [26] had been a "geographical bachelor" over the past two years because her TC husband, who earned more than she did, owned his own business and could not relocate it to her duty location.

Three officers, formerly married to other military members, stated that their pay dropped after their husband resigned from the Navy. A Lieutenant [12] whose husband became a civilian after 11 YOS missed the extra housing allowances. Two of these officers [18] and [10] commented that they received lower priority for Navy daycare at the Child Development Center than if they were still a dual-military couple. One Lieutenant Commander [18] described the financial impact of having to rely on commercial daycare in Washington D.C.:

> An advantage of dual-military is that you don't have the pay drop when transferred, and there is job security. You also get priority for daycare at the child-care centers. When you have a civilian spouse, you are not eligible, since there are already 100+ names on the list ahead of you. It costs $400 a month for military daycare, and $800 to $1200 a month for civilian daycare. Even more for a nanny. And, that is if I could find civilian daycare! That amounts to a big difference in lost pay of $1200 a month.

Three officers, whose husbands had given up their career to become a stay-at-home care-giver, missed the second income. They did not consider this to be a serious disadvantage, however, because they had voluntarily entered into these arrangements. A Navy nurse [21], whose husband gave up his career in civilian aviation, stated:

> I can't think of any disadvantages except the major one we've had to live with, but it was due to our commitment to the family...that we've gone without the second income. But again, that was a choice issue, because he could have gone out and taken a variety of jobs, or lived away from us.

> Many times, if he were to have pursued his aviation career, as he was initially, that would have required that he lived away because, where I was stationed at, there were no opportunities for him there.

Similarly, a Marine Captain [22] commented:

> With our situation—not having to worry about, or paying for child care—there is only one income rather than two, and that makes a big difference. So, that is a disadvantage. But, we just wanted to do this for the stability for our daughter, at least for the first couple of years.

A Navy Lieutenant [28] described the trade-offs of her spouse resigning from the military:

> With a civilian spouse, he can pick up when, and where you move, and follow along. Another advantage of him being in the military before, is that he understands what I do. The military is not a big mystery. He understands why and when things are happening. Wives freak-out if orders get canceled and they don't have an explanation of why. I just like us not both being in, it makes everything so much easier. Yet, the tradeoff is that we made a lot of money as a dual-military family. Now our income is cut in half. One gets the benefits for being married and one used to get paid for being single, which seemed strange at the time.

One Lieutenant [6], married to a former enlistee, was concerned that her husband was worried because she worked primarily with men:

> I have to work with mainly men. Then, I have to explain what I am doing to my husband…such as why I went out to lunch with a group of guys. He may have worries about me always being around so many other men. It is awkward at times. My husband also feels awkward at wardroom functions, being the only male spouse. Plus, I'm pretty strong-willed and possibly too hard on him. I know we could live on my paycheck alone, but if he's unemployed like six hours, then I'm asking him, "So, when are you going to get a job?"

A surface warfare officer [9], whose husband is a full-time student, worried about the couple's future if they were to have children and she decided to resign:

> Financially, as sole provider, I am limited in my decision to get out and raise a family, until he finishes his education and finds a good job. I worry over what would happen if I had a baby… .

8. Many Officers Still Believe that Military Women Married to Civilians Are Discriminated Against

Chapter II gave a brief description of the evolution of dependency regulations and policies pertaining to military women who are married to a civilian spouse. Despite much progress in this area—legislation and policy revisions during the 1970s and 1980s—two-thirds of the officers interviewed thought that some changes still needed to be made. Only 31 percent of the interviewees responded negatively when asked whether they believed any existing military policies or common practices discriminate against them or their civilian husband. The remaining officers (22 of 32) presented various examples of what they perceived as discriminatory practice and/or policies. The top five responses given along with their frequencies were:

1. The opportunities for male spouses in the wives/spouse clubs—13
2. Treating female military personnel like they were dependents—5
3. The prevailing military culture—3
4. The lower priority given for daycare—3
5. No recognition of spouse's career for co-location—3

The following five comments illustrate why officers feel that the spouse clubs discriminate against their husbands. A Lieutenant [4] gave a typical response:

> The spouse club is not a "spouses" club, it's a "wives" club. There really isn't an opportunity for the guys to do manly kinds of things, like go golfing. It's always like teas or craft fairs...like the club here. The guys are not going to want this. They have tried to combine them all together, but in reality, they should really have a separate husbands club and wives club. You can't just uniformly put them together and change the name and expect everyone to be equally served and happy. This is a sort of discrimination against husbands.

Another Lieutenant [5] described an unwelcome atmosphere for non-traditional couples:

> Well, definitely the support network that traditionally has been for female spouses. I think it can invite an unwelcome atmosphere for the military couple that is doing it the "non-traditional way." I can see that setting as being discriminatory. But, my husband is the type of person that just does his own thing...so, I don't know if he would necessarily want to take part in those sort of things. So, on a personal level, it doesn't touch us very much, but on a broader level, when the wives club president here writes a letter saying—well it's not even the wives club—but she writes a letter referring to, what she is president of, as the wives club, which she did do in a publication that goes out to the whole community. I think that can set up a situation where people can feel unwelcome, unusual or different in a bad way. She's just discounting all other situations out there other than her own.

A Lieutenant [9] surface warfare officer thought the Navy is getting better in this area, but since most husbands work, they are not actively involved in the spouse clubs. She went on to say:

> I think that Navy tradition, in general, has always been the male officer and the wife. You've got the Navy wife prayer, "I'm the Navy wife and God created the Navy wife...." There's nothing different for the male spouse or that even recognizes their existence, really.

A Chaplain [17] shared why she felt the spouse clubs discriminate against husbands:

> Yeah, I think it's a lot of attitude. When we were just married, I kept getting all the letters to the spouse club addressed to me, and he got none of them, no matter how many times we told them that he was the spouse and that I was at sea...and it really irritated him. Then, there was this Admiral's speech I listened to, where he would talk about the wives being the most important resource...and it really leaves out the male. There are some communities that refuse to change the name to "spouses club" and still insist on calling it the officer's wives club. I think a lot of the issues that they talk about tend to be things like getting a mechanic to fix your car—the real "cutesy" stuff—or cooking classes. They tend to really not be geared towards a professional person, whether that person is a female or a male. And, I found that even some of the female spouses were pretty insulted by some of the spouse club directions, and the patronizing way some of the COs of the ships spoke to them. I mean, here you have sometimes, women or men who are leaders in their companies or corporations, and they are being talked to like they just came out of

kindergarten, or like they have some "desperate wife" apron on. We are in the 90s!

A Lieutenant [28], whose husband is a stay-at-home dad, described the situation at her current command:

> The wives in the club are very awkward around us. They didn't know who to ask to join, so they finally sent us a fruit basket. In other words, "You are welcome to join, but you guys figure it out."

Five officers insisted that the prevailing assumption held by most individuals in the military community is that the woman must be a "dependent." Rather than clarify the situation first, these individuals working in many of the services on base often slight the active-duty woman. One officer [28] said:

> It's awkward that people assume that he's military and I'm the dependent. It irritates me a lot, that the assumption is that he's the one in the military. The reason I'm the one in, still, is because I'm a 1700 [fleet support officer] and they are not going to send me on a ship or deployment.

Another officer [31] told a story illustrating how these careless assumptions can drive a person to leave the military:

> I do run into different treatment at places like medical, when I take the kids and they ask for the husband's social security number, because they assume I'm the dependent. I say, "No, I'm the sponsor." That's just them needing to wake up and not assume that I'm not in the military, but it's just weird. I have a friend who got out of the Navy the year after marrying a guy in the Army. She just hated that attitude, that she ran up against all the time when she tried to deal with people. She knows how the military runs, and she knows the rank structure, and to be talked down to, and not listened to, and not getting a response to requests.... She goes off on them big time, but she gets what she wants, which is what should happen. But, it's not right that I have to go to such measures and speak up. What about these female E-2s and E-3s? They don't know and don't speak up for themselves. She gets that a lot on the Army side, but I also see that in the Navy, at medical, when I take the kids in.

Three interviewees referred to the Navy culture as discriminatory against women. A Chaplain [17], who recently deployed, used "WestPac Rules" as an example:

> It's just the attitudes, even on the ship. I got into fairly lengthy arguments with men on the ship about the "WestPac Rules"...where what happens on the ship, stays on the ship. I said, "I'm sorry, I speak intimately with my husband about what I do." If I'm going to go out to dinner with another officer in the wardroom, I'm going to tell him, whether it's a female or a male. He doesn't expect me to go to dinner all by myself! He does recognize that there are 200 officers in the wardroom and only 25 of them are female. It may be possible that I will be out with another guy! And, he doesn't need to worry about mentioning that at the spouse club...that it is perfectly legit, and he's going to hear it from me. Over, and over again, I got, "You're not supposed to talk about it, because you are putting the rest of us at risk." And I said, "You're not at risk if you're not doing anything." I would argue and argue, until I was blue in the face...that pervasive attitude that men who wish to play around don't want to get caught by having someone mentioning that they were seen with someone else.

This same officer explained another one of the surface warrior taboos that she broke while serving on that ship:

> The other thing that I was just shocked about, perhaps that surprised me the most, was when the ship returned and my husband drove the three hours down to surprise me. Well, I was so excited, that I was telling the other guys that my husband surprised me last night at the Hail and Farewell. Every one of the guys went, "Oh no, you have to get him broken of that habit. He can't surprise you." Why not? Well, when push came to shove, it was because they didn't want to potentially get caught inappropriately...well, my husband doesn't need to worry! That surprised me, because I don't even think all of those guys were involved in the hanky-panky that was alluded to, but they are so stereotyped in their perceptions....that are perpetuated in that male club...that they felt very uncomfortable with that male spouse.

A Lieutenant Commander [32] explained how she percieved the Navy culture discriminating against active-duty women:

> I think it's just their methodology of operating. You get so tired of hearing, if you go into the uniform shop and there are no women's uniforms or very little selection, "We just don't have enough of the female

demographics here." That is the biggest problem in the military, that everything is done in "cookie-cutter" fashion. Anybody who doesn't completely fit that mold is completely ignored. It's kind of disrespectful to the individual, not so much insulting or discrimination. Or, you go to the front gate of a base, and you drive up in civilian clothes, and you don't get saluted. If my husband is driving, and he's in civilian clothes, and he has the blue sticker [indicating officer rank] on the car, he gets saluted. So, I roll my window down and show my ID card and say, "Excuse me, do you no longer salute LCDRs?" And they say, "There's no way for me to know you are a LCDR." So, it's just the little things just get to you after awhile. I've been active for 13 years...when is it going to change? If you go to an Air Force or Army base it's not that way. In their cultures, a person is an active-duty member until proven otherwise. In the Navy culture, everybody assumes as a woman, that you are a dependent unless proven otherwise. My husband doesn't get asked those questions, even though he's the dependent now. They just ask for his ID card and assume he's active-duty. He has to tell them that he is the dependent and that his wife is the sponsor. Then, these people try to argue with him that they need his social and not mine! Is this something that will stop the fleet from getting underway? No, but it is something that grinds at you every day, grinding away at your credibility.

A Commander [10] was one of three officers who pointed out that dual-military couples have a higher priority for daycare on base:

The working spouse doesn't count as high as dual military, and they are only a short step above the non-working spouse. The assumption is that the civilian spouse doesn't have to work. They only work because you want extra money or something like that. But, the thing with the male spouses is that, typically, their whole value of who they are is their job. If they don't have a job, then they're not a person, and they lose their ego if they are not tied to some sort of a job and able to produce something. Because, every time we move he loses it, and until he finds a new job, and gets into the swing of it, and gets back on his feet again, he's real hard to deal with because he loses his identity. So, the idea that for child care, if you are a working spouse it doesn't really count, doesn't help when you relocate. If you get to the new place, find a job, but you are at the bottom of the child care list...it's really hard to deal with. I know there isn't enough child care for everyone, and they have to draw the line somewhere. The Navy is not in the business of providing child care. It's just for a male spouse, it's not the same as the wife who can stay home. If you ask other guys they might not agree, but my husband's ego can't handle staying at home.

It is noteworthy that a few officers thought active-duty women were actually treated worse than their civilian spouses. For instance, a Lieutenant [16] stated, "I think civilian spouses get better health care than we do, at least here. I don't know if that's universal, but it's true here." A Lieutenant Commander [32] agreed with this perception:

> You go into a Navy hospital and all their paperwork, when signing up for prenatal care, completely asks information about the husband. What is your husband's duty station? Where does your husband work? How can we contact your husband?...and I'm in uniform going through this, and the person interviewing me is asking me that while my husband is sitting there in civilian clothes. I think everyone across the board makes blatant...an assumption of ignorance, that everyone who comes and sits in that chair is a dependent because they are female. ... And, when you take it one step farther and ask department heads in charge of hospitals, and medical service corps individuals who made up these forms, "Now why are you asking about my husband's information when it has nothing to do with him?" Their answer is that OB/GYN clinics exist for dependent wives, not for active-duty women. They say, "Well, we are here to keep the wives of the guys at sea happy. If we don't do that, they have a morale issue."

C. SPOUSE THEMES

This second group of 12 themes is derived from the interviews with the civilian husbands. The first theme is demographic in nature. The next two themes center around the spouses' satisfaction and adaptation to the military lifestyle. This is considered important because the decisions of military members to remain in service are often influenced by factors related to the family and spousal attitudes. The next five themes are related to the spouses' employment status, whether they are employed full-time or currently unemployed, filling the homemaker or stay-at-home care-giver roles. The ninth theme explores whether these spouses are concerned about the chance that their wife may be sexually harassed or discriminated against while in the military. This is a concern

unique to the male spouse, and one that was unlikely to be held by the "traditional" military wife of old. The next two themes provide the husbands' views about the advantages and disadvantages of being a male civilian spouse. The final theme in this section explores the husbands' opinions concerning their participation in spouse clubs.

1. A Majority of Spouses Have Prior Military Experience

The vast majority of spouses interviewed (25 of 32) were military veterans. Ten of the spouses were retired from either the Navy (8), Marine Corps (1) or Air Force (1). Three of the ten had received medical retirements. Of the remaining seven retirees, three had opted for early retirement, three had 20 years of service and one had served 24 years. The remaining 15 spouses had served from four to 17 years, with the average length amounting to seven years. Nine of the 15 non-retirees served in the Navy, three in the USMC, two in the Army and one in the British Royal Air Force (RAF). Of the 25 ex-military, 17 were officers and eight were enlisted at the time they left active duty. Only seven spouses had never served in the military.

This theme was derived directly from demographic information obtained from the spouses during the interviews. The proportion of prior military spouses—78 percent—is higher than that found by the 1992 DoD Survey, which revealed that 68 percent of civilian husbands had prior military experience. [Ref. 28] Of the seven TC spouses, three were foreign nationals—from Ireland, Great Britain and the Philippines—who had become U.S. citizens.

A majority of the veteran spouses (20 of 25) made the decision to leave the military some time after marrying their current wife. The other five interviewees left

military service prior to their marriage. When asked why they chose to get out of the military and their wife chose to stay, these spouses often gave multiple reasons, including:

1. My wife had better career opportunities—8
2. I was eligible to retire and she was not—6
3. The officer-enlisted relationship was prohibited—5
4. I hated sea-duty, my community or career path—4
5. I was involuntarily separated or medically discharged—4
6. I wanted to avoid family separation—3

The following comments illustrate the decision-making process of these prior dual-military couples. For instance, one former officer [Y] gave the following reasons for his decision to leave the military. He and his wife had just completed tours on separate continents:

> It was a matter of several things. We had been separated for a little over a year when I made the decision. The Air Force was offering early retirement, which was how I managed to get out at 16 years. Then I got passed over once [failed to be promoted] for O-5. Even though I had a lot of senior backing to make sure I got selected next time, there was no guarantee. Plus, the atmosphere of the Air Force was changing so much, and I was non-rated, and unless you had wings in the Air Force you just really weren't going anyplace. So, the atmosphere had just really changed from when I joined, and when my dad was a career enlisted. It was a different Air Force, and I got tired of playing the games.

A former Marine officer [J] gave this explanation:

> She still had time left on her obligation. Plus, I wasn't going anywhere, wasn't doing what I wanted to do (community). I was a Marine tanker, similar to a SWO in that they "eat their young." Since the Marines don't have money for tanks, we don't have our own schools...so we are indoctrinated in the Army way of doing things.... It wasn't even my first choice at TBS (The Basic School).

A former Navy cryptologist [I] said he was also dissatisfied with the way his career path was headed and that all of his friends were "bailing out." He explained:

> My last tour was on a big staff and I really didn't care for the staff work, at all. And, in my community, my career trajectory from that point on would have been nothing but staff work, and I wasn't interested in that. My wife seemed to be enjoying what she was doing. I really enjoyed my first two tours, which were operational on subs and flying. I hated the staff job after that. I can't use separation as my excuse, since I wouldn't be deployed at all. It was a really cushy job. Another reason was that a lot of people I really enjoyed working with were bailing out ahead of me. I may have stayed in if they had, but when I saw the people that I really liked leaving, and the one's I really didn't like staying.... It's a small community that was undergoing a mass exodus at the time. When I was in London, practically ever LT that I knew that was dual-military, the guy was getting out. It was remarkable, because it was five couples, and all the guys were getting out for different reasons. I was the only one in my designator (occupation). The aviators were leaving because they saw their communities going away; the SWOs are treated like dogs, by and large; and the sub guys couldn't make XO with all the ships going away.

A former submariner [B] described his decision to retire at 20 years rather than continue his career:

> I was eligible to retire and she wasn't, or I guess she could have taken one of the VSI or those other early retirement offers. I was at the point in my career that, as a submariner, I wasn't going to drive a ship again, and as far as I could tell, career opportunities were limited to pretty mundane stuff...and it looked like she had better opportunities, especially to go different places. Deployments and separation came into play in the decision to retire...the demands on our time were great enough that we decided that wasn't how we wanted to raise a family, and I could solve that problem by retiring. We had spent 16 months apart while she was in Hawaii with our first child, and then I changed home ports, and then went on another 6-month deployment after only being home 10 months. It was some time during that period that I decided I had it within my power to change that, so I did.

One Marine Captain [N] was medically retired about the time he met his future wife:

> The medical situation actually helped, because if I'd stayed in I had orders to 29 Palms, while she would have been in Quantico. So, that wouldn't have worked...getting out actually helped our relationship.

The birth of their first child was a key reason why another Marine [K] decided to resign:

> The entire time we've been married we discussed the relative merits of one of us, both of us, or neither of us getting out. But, when we decided to start having kids, we didn't want to move the baby from place to place in different daycare situations. Then it really made the most sense for me to be the one to get out, because I never really did plan to stay in for as long as I did. I enjoyed what I did more than I expected, I guess. I had always planned to go back to teaching, while my wife really didn't have anything else she was planning on.

An ex-Army enlisted man [V], married to a Lieutenant Commander, explained why he decided to leave, although no military policy prohibited their relationship across service lines:

> I had four years in once we had our son. I thought I would have a better chance of getting a job, being a man, whenever we moved around. Plus, I was enlisted, and she was an officer. We were also dealing with two different services, and we didn't want to be separated.

Only five of the 25 veteran spouses found the transition to civilian life difficult. One ex-enlisted man [D] attributed his difficulty to the speed at which he made the transition:

> The transition was tough, especially since I made the decision in February, and got out in April. Yeah, that was tough, because when I got out, I wasn't really sure that I had prepared for what I was going to do. So, that was very nerve-racking actually.

Several other spouses found the transition easy because they still had the security and ties to the military through their wives. One spouse [CC] commented:

> The transition didn't bother me because I was always a rebel. Even in the beginning, at the Academy, I was always wondering what I wanted to do with my life...I never knew. It just seemed like it was a security blanket, and I still have that security with the wife in the service. So, it never affected me.

An ex-Marine [J] also mentioned the advantages of having a military wife during his transition:

> As far as my paperwork and separating from the battalion, it was an abrupt release. But, as far as separating from the Marine Corps, we lived on base, so I was still in the same environment, my buddies lived around me, and things like that made the transition very easy. It wasn't like I had to worry, "Oh, no, I have to get a job, we have to pay the bills." The house and medical and stuff like that were taken care of. I know for a fact, that if we had both been leaving the military at the same time that would have been very difficult, because I really had no clue on what I was going to get into next. I did know that I needed to go to school to build up some credentials and stuff, but the getting a job issue, and what am I going to do when I get out in the real world...those would have been some serious issues right there. No, it's been very easy with my wife still in the military to ease that transition period.

A former Marine infantry officer [N] described his transition:

> The transition was tough. I had spent eight years, 6.5 of which were in the fleet, and I think, if I hadn't gone to a civilian graduate school the first year I got out that it would have been worse... that gave me a chance to adjust to a non-work environment before going to the civilian workforce. It was probably more of an adjustment from the fleet, than it was from the Marine Corps. It was hard, but actually being engaged, and then getting married to someone on active-duty at the time I got out was really helpful, because I didn't have to make a real abrupt cut. I was able to stay involved a little bit with the culture. You slowly sort of wean yourself off, although you have to finally realize, "Wait a second, you're not in, stop it! It's not 'we're' going to go do this...your wife is going to do that...." That was hard, but it had less to do with the relationship, than on the fact that in my case, I got out in a way other than I would have hoped. But actually being a spouse, becoming a military spouse about that time probably made the transition easier, a sort of gradual process, although I did have to make a concerted effort at a point to say, "Stop! The weaning had ended. You're done, stop that!" It's hard to stop thinking of yourself as still being a part of the service.

2. Spouses Generally Perceive Their Military Service as Key to Their Acceptance Within the Military Community

An earlier theme revealed that most (25 of 32) spouses in the sample have military experience. This theme builds on that commonality, showing how this military background is considered advantageous. Nearly every interviewee mentioned the importance of being ex-military, in one context or another. All interviewees, officer and spouse alike, believed having these shared experiences and an understanding of the Navy or Marine Corps language improved the spouse's ability to interact socially with the officer's peers. For instance, when asked if he was treated differently as a male dependent, a former British officer [AA] replied:

> No, because I'm ex-military, I knew what I was getting into. I spoke the language already. I never felt threatened by military men as far as my relationship goes. It's about trust, and American military men seem to be much better behaved than in the RAF.

Another spouse [K], who had served six years in the Marine Corps, agreed:

> No, I don't think so. At the previous place I didn't notice any real difference. It's probably, in a lot of ways, easier for me to relate to her and her work mates. I've only been out three years so I can...when they start talking shop, I know what they are talking about, it's not foreign terms to me then. It's a whole new issue. There aren't too many more [male spouses] I guess. Most women officers aren't married, so there weren't that many couples to socialize with.

A former Navy officer [I] put it this way:

> I don't think so, but it could be because I think I can relate pretty well to them, and I was in longer than most of them have been in. Plus, I'm in the reserves, not a paid billet, but I'm an O-4, so a little bit in the back of my mind I still feel like I'm in the Navy. But, I don't really think I'm treated differently. I knew what I was getting into. Since I am prior military, I knew what to expect before getting out, so there are fewer surprises than for someone who hasn't been in the Navy.

One interviewee [F] had served a 4-year tour in the Marine Corps over 25 years ago and was also from a military family. He explained the importance of his background in the military community:

> For me, my military background as a Marine brings me up to that level, even though I was enlisted. For me to mingle with military people and officers is not a problem. I was a military dependent for my childhood too. My father was a career man in the Army. It is interesting, being back as a dependent at this stage in my life. I was a dependent as a kid, then I was active-duty, served my time and got out, did my thing, and now I'm back being a dependent again.

As expected, the military retirees interviewed, regardless of branch of service, considered themselves "at home" around active-duty personnel. A retired Air Force Major [Y] commented:

> I think being retired military helps a lot in that aspect. I know what to expect, and can see the military in a different light. I'm not sure how spouses who weren't military before were treated, but there is no reason to treat anyone differently based upon where they work. I guess if you are in a military career field were it's more military-oriented, like a ship driver or tank driver or fighter pilot or something like that, then it's harder to relate to someone in the civilian world. But with computers it's similar in both worlds, per say Most of my wife's peers treat me the same as anyone else. I'm just in a different line of work.

Another retiree [O] with 24 YOS stated:

> They look at me as a retired Navy SEAL. I get 100 percent respect for being a retired SEAL. Military people look at civilians, such as professors with their long hair, and think they have kind of a sleazy job at first, but when you get to know them you realize they are great guys.

Similarly, a retired Navy submariner [B] gave this opinion:

> Well, being retired, I think I can talk casually with her peers at any gathering, and I think they feel comfortable talking with me. So, I don't think there is any effect there. If I was only a civilian all along, I'm kind of reflecting on the people I've known, women officers married to spouses with no prior experience...I think it affects one only in that you can't have the scope of discussion which narrows. You can have social discussions

about topics common to both of you, and you exclude any military-related things because you can't talk about those without that common experience. But as far as being accepted, I've seen generally good acceptance.

A retired Marine officer [R], who is primary care-giver for his children, did not rely on his past to boost his self-esteem:

> I'm not treated differently, maybe because I was in the Marines. I don't see it as a problem. When I'm around other male Marines still on active-duty, friends of hers, I don't feel any need to be identified as a former Marine. I don't particularly need that to prop up my self-esteem or anything like that. In fact, I would like to be known for being much better at what I do now, which is taking care of the kids or other things, than anything I did in the past while a Marine.

A former Navy officer [E], with a single tour under his belt, thought being a stay-at-home care-giver was more of an obstacle in social interactions than being a dependent because:

> I have enough in common with them. I can talk about ships and stuff because I was in. I'm kind of one of them. But a lot of time, it takes time to get used to the stay-at-home situation.

Some officers and spouses also believed that veteran status helped the civilian spouse get better service on base, whether at the commissary, exchange, or medical clinic. These spouses were often treated better than female spouses and, in some cases, even active-duty women, because employees and medical providers often assumed the male spouse was the active-duty sponsor, and assumed the female officer was the civilian. For example, a retired Navy officer [O] remarked:

> I don't get pushed around in medical like the average dependent wife. I'm bold enough to complain to the department head in the office. Men are generally more assertive, since they are conditioned through sports, as opposed to women's socialization.

A few of the stay-at-home spouses were the target of friendly ribbing by family and friends, although it did not seem to affect their self-esteem. One retired Navy enlisted husband [Z] described the impression some active-duty men have of male spouses:

> I think that other people, her peers, think of me in a different way than they would if the situation had been reverse or otherwise. I can't really pinpoint it word for word, but I've had people [her peers] do things like pat me on the back and say, "All right!, Good job!" My impression of that is they thought I'd landed a golden goose or something. It's funny, they don't do that to women. Anyway, I get that impression from a lot of people. I also have, not in my own experience, but while I was still in the military, there were a lot of comments about male spouses...that they just sit around at home, drinking beer all the time. So, I'm sure there are people who have that preconceived notion. Of course, it will always look that way a little bit, having to move all the time, and find a job each time. However, it doesn't effect my self-esteem, I think.

One former enlisted man [FF], with a very out-going personality, mentioned the ribbing he gets from his golf buddies:

> I know most of the spouses in Fort Ord where we live because I introduced myself to them. They accept me for who I am. I've had a couple of guys who I golf with, however, say, "are you a stay-at-home husband? Blah...blah." But they are just mad because my wife will make Commander before they will.

Another former enlisted man [D] sacrificed his career after 13 years to be with his wife. He is currently filling the homemaker role so his wife can concentrate on her studies:

> I get a lot of grief when I talk to her brothers and even my brother. They say, "Wish I could find a woman to go to work, and let me stay home all day and do nothing." But, little do they know that I actually do something once and awhile.

One spouse [I], who planned to work from his home until his wife retires in six years, had this to say about their peers:

> I think a lot of them are more envious of the position that I'm in, because the Navy has changed so much. Because, now I can do what I really want, and we still have good financial stability with her still in the military.

The importance of an individual feeling as though he or she belongs to a peer group should not be underestimated. Five of the seven TC spouses had greater difficulty "fitting in" the military community. They admitted that being a male civilian spouse in the hyper-masculine environment of the military affected their self-esteem and how they were treated within the institution. Only one ex-enlisted spouse felt that his status now, as a family member, affected his self-esteem and how he was treated. Every other interviewee thought he was treated as well, if not better, than he might have expected. One TC spouse [H], homemaker, and stay-at-home dad, shared his fear of not being accepted:

> No, I thought that might be a problem with the military folks, that they might shun me, but it has been completely opposite. I have had a lot of respect from them for what I was doing. I think, just the fact that I am male, transcends the differences in occupation...you know, the male bonding and like-interests sort of thing.

Other TC spouses felt less comfortable within the military institution. For instance, one Filipino spouse [T] shared his feelings:

> Other military wives hesitate to approach me or assume I'm in the military. I'm proud to say to them that I'm not in the military, my wife is the military member. For instance, in our neighborhood in housing, I'm the only guy married to a female officer. It's kind of weird for me to see all the wives staying at home, and me and my wife going to work each day. ... I feel like I'm not respected by those in the military institution because I'm not on active-duty. I don't get any respect compared to the other males in the military in similar situations, such as medical or using other services on base. Outside the military, however, I feel fine.

Another TC spouse [M] commented:

> Yes, definitely. Uncomfortable, not only on my part, I'm ignored on the military side, or uncomfortable with how they read me. And, I'm uncomfortable, not so much with military personnel, but with the social interactions that go on. Hail and Farewells, Birthday Balls, Chaplain Balls. It's almost like, "What do they do with me, the male spouse?" In fact, one chaplain my wife worked for, he wasn't a chauvinist or anything, but he said to me, "What do you do during the day?" He had no idea. So, he found it very non-traditional that the male spouse stayed home with no kids. And a lot of the women spouses were like that. I found I had more in common with the military spouses. I was always more comfortable, I think, with the women at the command, the civilian wives.

One former enlisted spouse [D] thought being a homemaker affected his self-esteem because:

> I think a lot of the guys, who wouldn't consider doing it, are going to look differently upon myself or any male who is a stay-at-home type, and maybe a little more so than others, because we don't have any children. But, they would only do it for a short time if they didn't have something—kids, hobby—or they would get bored. I have the wood working. Trust me, I would have been out the door doing something!

A retired officer [S], who had remained unemployed to fill the traditional supportive role for his flag-officer wife, talked about the importance of his former Navy career in defining his self-esteem:

> That's a good point, and a lot of people have questioned me about the self-esteem role. They just can't understand how, especially in my case, where my wife is taller than me and she is a lot more senior than I would ever hope to be, and she is the one with the position of power and authority,...how do I cope? Well, I think to be a Naval aviator you have to have an ego to begin with, so for most carrier aviators, a lack of self-esteem is not something they are noted for, usually it's the other extreme. So, I think I've found a happy balance. I'm comfortable with myself and I spent 20 years in the military. I think I would have a big problem if I didn't, or only spent three years in the Navy and didn't have a career. I feel comfortable in saying, "I had my Navy career and retired, and there is nothing wrong with that...although my wife had a 30-year career." That doesn't bother me a bit, because she likes the work and I'm quite happy

tending the home and taking care of the social obligations. That allows me a lot of time to do the things that I enjoy.

3. A Majority of Spouses Are Very Supportive of Their Wife's Career

Eighty-eight percent of the spouses (28 of 32) interviewed were supportive of their wife's career. Twenty-three spouses were "very supportive" and five were "fairly supportive" on a 5-point scale. Only three reported mixed feelings or that they were not supportive. Additionally, most husbands (25 of 30)—one officer was retiring and one was being separated—hoped their wives would remain in the Navy or Marine Corps for at least 20 years to qualify for a pension.

Studies have shown a link between spousal support for the military member's career and decisions to stay in service. For this reason, the 1992 DoD Survey of Officer and Enlisted Personnel and Spouses asked various questions to determine spouse satisfaction and degrees of support for the member's career. The results showed that 89 percent of all civilian husbands were supportive of their partner's military career. However, only 53 percent of the husbands wanted their wife to remain in the military after completing her present obligation. [Ref. 28:p. 13] Although these figures represent the opinions of civilian husbands married to officers and enlisted personnel from all four services, they are still useful as a baseline to compare the responses of this sample.

The couples interviewed in the present study definitely seem to reinforce the idea of a link between a husband's support for the officer's career and her retention plans. All but four spouses (88 percent) said they were supportive of their wife's career, and 83 percent favored their wife's decision to stay until retirement. In the four instances where the husband was not supportive, three of the officers reported that they planned to leave

the military at the end of their obligated service. The fourth officer [30], in the surface warfare community, had filed for a divorce and intended to remain in the Navy for a full career.

Five spouses thought their wife should stay in the military only as long as she was happy and wanted to stay. This group replied that they intended to support whatever course their wife pursued. Only one spouse [EE] answered that they [he and his wife] had not yet decided whether his wife would remain until retirement. The following comments are from the majority of spouses who said they were supportive of their wife remaining in the military until retirement. For example, an ex-sailor [D] remarked candidly:

> That would be the optimum thing. If it doesn't happen, it doesn't happen. We will roll with the punches. But, that would be nice. I think, that was her intention when she came in. And, after I give up 13 years, it would be nice to get something from the government. It's a tough decision to give up that many years, but if you want to be with someone that is the thing you have to do.

An ex-Army officer [V] was thinking about the long-term good of his family when he explained the reason for his support:

> I'd like her to do 20 years, since she really likes what she is doing. I also think highly of the military. It provides good opportunities, especially for women. I would even support my son's decision to join if he decides to do so. Yes, the more support we give her, the better off the entire family will be. It works out for the best.

A Commander's TC spouse [W], who had trailed his wife for nine years, had this to say:

> Yes, she's on track to retire now after her pay-back tour. I'm supportive of her staying in as long as she isn't having a bad time. It's interesting seeing her pursue her career and how far she can go with it. So far though, we have had really good places to live, so my perceptions may change.

> We are going to Norfolk, and I don't know how I'm going to like that. I just worry how inter-racial couples will be treated there.

A Lieutenant's self-employed spouse [F] made the ultimate career sacrifice:

> I'm selling my hang-gliding business to follow her into the sunset, so to speak. There's a double-bladed sword on that one; it's really a cool job, but it's one of those skills I can take and do elsewhere.

Interestingly, four interviewees were not only supportive of their partner's career, but very optimistic regarding their wife's future potential. One spouse [Y] said the following about his Lieutenant Commander wife when asked if he wanted her to stay until retirement:

> Yes, I think so. Matter of fact, I would like her to retire as a flag officer. I don't know if that is possible in her sub-specialty [community] or not. But, if she makes O-6 or O-7, more power to her.

Another ex-enlisted spouse [X] replied, "Yes, I would like her to make Admiral! She thinks it's a joke but I think she could do it." Similarly, a retired Navy Commander [O] was more supportive of his wife pursuing a career than was the officer herself. He responded, "Yes, at least until 20 years. But I think she has the potential to stay and make captain or flag even."

Four husbands were somewhat less supportive of their partner's career. One retired Marine officer [R], who stays at home with their children and attends school part-time, responded pragmatically :

> Yes, it's only four more years. I'm very supportive, in theory anyway. I suppose I'm like any other spouse in this position. I see things differently than I did before, or my experiences are different than they were before. And, I think we have some of the classic bread-winner, stay-at-home sort of conflicts. In theory, the most important thing we can do right now is to keep her career going, if for no other reason than to keep her going in the right direction.

According to one Lieutenant, with almost ten YOS, her former enlisted husband was troubled because he was not filling the traditional male role of family breadwinner. This stay-at-home care-giver [Q] agreed:

> I'm mixed or neutral about her staying for 20. What I want, and what is better for our family, are two different things. I think I'd rather her get out of the military, because I hate moving around all the time. But, at this time in my life, I think her staying in is more important for the family, because of the benefits, and she's happy there and doing outstanding. So, I think she would be crazy to get out now, unless something better comes up in four years. At this point, right now, she's planning on staying in and I'm supportive of that, as long as it's not too much longer. I'm sick of moving really! If she wants to stay in, then I'm pretty much going to support her career. I think it goes both ways, and she will support mine as well.

A former Marine officer [J] said his degree of support changed with the birth of their child. Now, he is only fairly supportive because of the added pressure on his wife to manage career and family demands. This stay-at-home care-giver described the role conflict he perceived:

> She's doing very well, and I think as long as she's enjoying what she's doing then, yeah, stay in. But, with the kid it puts a lot of pressure on her because, I don't know, but it must be that maternal instinct kicking in. She's having a hard time juggling everything. She's still doing very well, but I can see she's way more stressed out than she ever used to be. That's why, I say, it's okay as long as you want to do it, but I think we both realize it's not the best thing.

When asked if he wanted his wife to pursue a career in the Marine Corps, he continued:

> I don't think that is necessarily important. Especially now, today, where you can't count on that providing benefits. I think service is important, but she's done her time, she's been deployed and things like that...so we're basically waiting for me to get gainfully employed. Then we will see where were at. Military retirement is definitely not what it used to be.

A Navy Lieutenant Commander [24] stated that her husband's support was conditional:

> He's very supportive as long as he knows that I'm considerate of his feelings. I think if I'd said, "We're going to Japan," then it wouldn't be so, but I think since he knows that I'm looking out for both of us when I make decisions, that he's been very supportive.

This officer's spouse also said he would be happy to see his wife retire in six years because she enjoyed what she was doing; but the decision was entirely up to her. Yet, he didn't consider himself very supportive because he was still working, which affected her future assignments. He explained:

> I'm fairly supportive. I think if I was very supportive, that I wouldn't be working. She got an offer to go to Japan from her detailer, which would probably be her first choice as far as a career-enhancing job, and I pretty much...well, I didn't overrule it, but we talked about it and decided that it may be best for her job, but not for the family. I mean, I would do whatever it took to get her ahead, accommodate what she's doing the best that I can, as long as it benefits her as well as the family, to get promoted and keep doing well.

4. Over Half of the Spouses Consider Themselves Primary Care-Giver for Their Children

In over half of the families with young children (11 of 20), the husband considered himself to be the primary care-giver for their children. Six interviewees felt that the couple shared the responsibility equally. Only three spouses responded that the officer-mother fulfilled this role.

A majority (7 of 11) of the spouses who felt they were primary care-givers were also "house husbands." One spouse was a full-time student, two were employed outside the home, and one tele-commuted to work from home. There were another two spouses who were at home during the day—one tele-commuter and another stay-at-home dad—

who felt that both spouses contributed equally in this area. It is noteworthy that the officer married to this stay-at-home spouse planned to leave the Marine Corps at the end of her obligated service to stay home and raise a family. It was clear to the researcher that this couple still believed in the traditional gender roles that have become less common in the 1990s.

The seven men who considered their primary occupation to be stay-at-home care-giver generally provided one of three reasons for their decision not to work full-time for pay. These were:

1. To avoid "institutionalizing" children in daycare
2. To provide stability for children
3. To spend more time with children

Only one retired Navy officer [CC], married to a Lieutenant Commander, commented that "it was easier than maintaining two careers, since the family could live comfortably on the combined income from his retirement and the officer's salary."

Four interviewees cited concerns over placing their children in daycare. One ex-Marine officer [J] worked as a substitute teacher until the birth of their child. He described his decision to stay at home with the baby and attend school part-time:

> Well, it was something we felt was important having one parent, at least one parent home, especially in the early years. Right now with school, obviously, we will have to use daycare some, but we wanted to postpone that for as long as possible.

A former Navy officer [E] with three children replied:

> We felt that it is better for the kids to have a parent home with them who has a vested interest in seeing that they get involved with broader interests, than if they were institutionalized or with a baby-sitter. Statistics show that kids reared at home have a bit of an edge over those who are raised by others outside of the family.

A former airline pilot [L] described how he went from flying full-time to part-time as his responsibilities at home increased with the birth of each of their three children. He and his wife agreed that one parent should be home with the children. However his wife's job as a Navy nurse, which included shift work and unpredictable hours, made it impossible to make stable daycare arrangements. Rather than shuffle the children around at short notice, he quit flying completely. He went on to clarify:

> We never really sat down up front and made these decisions, that she would work full-time and I would stay home. All along it was just getting too hard. We had planned to get her career started until I was established flying, and then she would get out. But the gap just got wider and wider, because the farther along she got, the better her job became, and the more demanding. Plus, it was going to be more concrete with her job; and her longevity was better; and she would get a retirement out of it.

Similarly, a former Marine officer [K] explained his motivation for becoming a homemaker and stay-at-home dad:

> Stability primarily. It's hard enough on kids moving as frequently as she's going to, not knowing who will be watching her from one day to the next. It will be different when she's old enough to go to pre-school or kindergarten.

Two fathers stated that they simply wished to spend more time with their children. A retired Marine officer [R] said:

> I want to be home with the children. It was a desire to try and give the children more, and I don't know if we've been successful, but that was the whole reason for it, really.

The second, a TC spouse [H], gave up his civilian job shortly after their marriage and the birth of their oldest child nine years ago. He remarked, "I want to be a part of raising my children. We're not financially strapped. I plan to go back to work eventually when the littlest one goes to school."

There were two couples without children in which the male spouse was an unemployed homemaker, but for differing reasons. A former enlisted [D] spouse cited financial reasons for his temporary experiment as a homemaker:

> Taxes were my main reason for not working here in California. It was really unclear when I got here...we were told that not only would my income be taxed by the state, but that 50 percent of the wife's income would also be taxed. When in fact that wasn't true and I found out much later, by which time I said, just forget it. I'll do the cooking and cleaning so she doesn't have to worry about that while she's in school. ... It took me awhile, but I'm now comfortable with staying home. However, I can't wait to leave the state and get back to work! Financially there's not a problem, it's worked out well with savings and everything.

In comparison, a retired officer [S] explained his decision to become a homemaker:

> It was not my intention to not work after retirement. I had a MS from NPS, but really hadn't used it in my Navy career. So, when I retired, I thought I would dabble in real estate. I thought, no matter where she goes I should be able to buy some property and then fix it up and sell it off. So, I enrolled and took all the courses to get an MBA in real estate, and then we were transferred to a location where it was impossible to pursue my plan due to all the restrictions and costs. Plus, we were only going to be there a short period. So, at that time I decided that I would be a stay-at-home spouse and look after her, and do the supporting spousal duties and play a lot of golf.

In cases where both parents were employed or students, the role of primary care-giver fell on whomever had the most flexible schedule at the time. For instance, one spouse's [R] answer typified these arrangements:

> I do all the scheduling of doctor appointments and make most of them. But it could be either of us, because it depends on if I'm in classes...then her number is up, and if I'm here...then my number is on the list. We work out the schedule as things change. That brings up another interesting thing. The dual-working couple, military or not, you have to have some outside network to help support—friends, neighbors, other parents in the same position, that you can have as an alternate for those situations. That helps quite a bit. We've tried to cultivate a few of those types of relationships so that we can help other people who have a sick child and can't go in daycare, by taking them at our house. I think those types of

> networks are essential. It's somewhat of a disadvantage being a male and developing these networks, but you've got to recognize that up front and overcome it. Most of the wives recognize my situation as identical to their own and they are fine with it—both close neighbors and friends.

Although stay-at-home spouses were generally satisfied with their decision not to work outside of the home, several reported some role-conflict or other adjustment they had to overcome. Three interviewees reported a feeling of isolation at home. A retired Marine [R], when talking about being a stay-at-home dad, replied:

> The disadvantage is a certain amount of isolation because most spouse programs are female-oriented, basically. There's a certain...the area really revolves around children more than anything else...everyone expects that it's mom that takes care of them; who goes into the classroom and helps out; who participates in school programs; participates in social programs and social work...and there is an enormous amount of.... I guess what I'm trying to get at is that, most of these women take these things pretty seriously and for good reason. Because, if you are going to take care of children you want to be involved in some ways that are different and satisfying to you, such as getting involved in organizations at school. There is a certain amount of...almost a power struggle...and some of these women take these positions very seriously and they take their involvement very seriously. A lot of them don't particularly like men involved in these things, and you don't get taken seriously. I'm not the type of person that often goes up and volunteers to do something, but I will participate if someone asks me to, but I'm not asked. If a male puts his name up on a list, he's not the one who will be asked, more than likely. So, from that aspect it's difficult.

A former Navy Lieutenant [E] agreed that there is some isolation in being a stay-at-home dad because he has different interests than most women he knows:

> Women sit around and chat when watching the kids. I like to play war games and watch violent movies. I do meet other spouses at social settings, and we talk about kids. But, I don't get together for coffee and donuts while the kids are playing. I haven't run into other men with similar interests. It is not a negative thing, since I still look for play groups through other networks. There are the story-times at the library and the children's museum projects. We meet people there. I'm pretty resourceful.

A former Marine [J] admitted that he doesn't feel too comfortable getting together with other women and their kids. He then explained the importance of having an outlet to keep from feeling "cooped up":

> We're pretty much on our own until my wife gets home. Really, I haven't had a problem, just because I have been able to get away everyday, and meet with other guys, and work out, and things like that. So, I don't get that cooped up feeling. If I didn't have that constructive outlet on a daily basis, yeah, I think I would be going a little batty. I wouldn't feel isolated, but like I'm atrophying or something like that. My friends are in the military too, so it's like I'm still there almost. You know, when you are used to keeping that edge, like physical fitness, or when you are discussing what might be going on in the world because you might get that call.... It's nice, I'm still able to have that stimulation, but if I didn't have that, say we lived out in town or in an isolated place where I didn't have any friends around, that would be kind of long days. But, we have a cute little kid, and she's fun to be with, and I don't mind that. I think the reason I don't mind it is because I know I have an outlet, and I'm not just playing kid games all day, doing chores and stuff like that. I think that really makes a difference, it's essential. Women do the same thing. I see them out walking together with their kids. That is their outlet, being with their peers and getting out of the house.

Another homemaker [L], with six years experience, responded that the household routine can get tedious:

> I think the household, not the fact that my wife has the career, but the household routine can be somewhat tedious at times. And, I think that is regardless of whether it's a guy or woman at home. I recommend that every guy go through it for a couple of years, at least, to appreciate what their wives go through. As far as employment, I've never felt mad because she's the one working, the one wearing the uniform.

This spouse [L] then admitted that his situation is the same as any mother who foregoes her career to raise a family and then attempts to re-enter the workplace:

> The wives have a place at colleges, what is it called?...for displaced homemakers when they've been home raising kids for 20 years, and then the kids have all gone off. Here they call it "re-entering" when they try to re-enter the workforce. They have special programs. Those are really similar experiences that I'm going through. I've really given up on

aviation. I've been out of the field so long, and it would take so long to catch up, so I've decided I'm just going to do something different.

Two spouses realized that there were benefits to joining a spouse club in the area of child care. One stay-at-home dad [R] had to scramble in an emergency to find child care because he had not availed himself of the spouse network. He recalled what it was like the last time he was left alone with the children after his wife was transferred to a new location a month ahead of the family:

> That is a very difficult situation, because if you don't have family in the area, then all you have is commercial child care or friends and neighbors. And, if you are not in the child care loop...when I first retired, my daughter was in child care a few hours, three days a week already and we continued so I could go to school. It's relatively easy to extend the hours in that situation. But, with her out of the loop completely now, it is a real concern. Other than neighbors or relatives, there is no place to turn.

The second spouse [Q] was able to take advantage of an existing play group for his 2-year-old son, even though he did not join the spouse group:

> Yes, they have something they call a play group and things like that for the kids, and I know my neighbors invited us to join their play group when we first arrived. That was nice. They were already established here and familiar with the neighbors who had children, so that helped a lot. It's an advantage of living in military housing.

Similarly, another ex-enlisted homemaker [D] thought his personality and out-going nature would help him develop a child-care network :

> I guess in not attending I would be at a networking disadvantage as far as a source of child care. At least a lot of men would be, but not me so much, because I am so outgoing and around the neighborhood all the time. I don't like being cooped up in the house, so I will be outside a whole lot so I do meet a lot of people. So, it probably would be a slight disadvantage, but I don't think I would have a problem finding daycare if I did need it. I'm just, "Hey, how you doing?"

5. Supporting Family and Personal Satisfaction Are Primary Reasons Men Give for Working

Spouses were asked about their primary reasons for working or staying at home. The 20 employed spouses gave various reasons for their decision to work. The top three responses and their frequencies included:

1. Financial necessity (support family or pay bills)—10
2. Personal satisfaction or enjoy working—9
3. No choice (it's the male's role to work)—7

No clear relationship was seen between the seven "traditionalists"—that is, those who felt that it is a husband's responsibility to support the family. A former Navy officer and regional sales manager [U] stated:

> I work for the income. My greatest difficulty has been career employment. I don't see too many house husbands. They are not yet accepted by society as well as women who are housewives. We're still expected to fulfill the working spouse role. I didn't find it enjoyable staying home with the kids. I didn't receive any flak from society. I was able to give a lot of support for our children during those first two years. I just can't stay home all day with the kids.

A newlywed of one year [DD] responded bluntly:

> I work to live, as opposed to live to work. It has nothing to do with personal satisfaction until maybe the point when, and if, I am working for myself.

An Ireland native [G] asked:

> What else am I going to do? It is the male's role to work. It's also driven by self-satisfaction. I have to be able to live.

Similarly, a former enlisted spouse [FF] replied:

> I can't go without working. I would go absolutely crazy. I'm just a worker. It's a totally different situation for guys, especially since I'm prior enlisted.

A former Army enlisted spouse [V] explained:

> I've been working all my life. There is some peer pressure to work and not be seen only as a military "dependent." This may bother some male spouses, at first, when they are young, 19 to 22, but after awhile, once you are older, it's not so important.

Almost half of the interviewees mentioned personal satisfaction as one of their primary reasons for working. For instance, one former Navy officer [I] described his situation as the best of both worlds:

> Just personal satisfaction and financial to some extent, but mostly personal satisfaction. I would be bored if I wasn't working. I am able to work at home now, so that gives me a little bit of both worlds—staying home to help provide child care and some of the other kid stuff. But, at the same time, I'm working at something that is fairly interesting.

Another husband [O] mentioned the need for an intellectual challenge:

> It provides intellectual growth and money for the family. It's important to me to have a meaningful challenge, that I learn as I do it. I design nuclear subs and make prototypes. The job is always new, and fun to research and develop technology to be used on new submarines. I even had a job blowing up mines in Venezuela for awhile, but that took me away from the family for several weeks, to a month at a time.

This same spouse then continued to tell an anecdote about a narrow-minded senior officer at his wife's past duty station:

> I was never so insulted as when an O-6 addressed all the spouses in Monterey and said, "You can either sit around and do nothing during your time here, or you can find something meaningful to do." The best example he had to offer was, "Look at Mrs. Smith. She went out and found a job as an assistant floral decorator." That was his best example? He had no clue that there are spouses who actually have an education out in the audience!

A teacher and part-time actor [M] responded:

> For me, my decision to work…that's a good question. For me, it's what I would call a matter of personal fulfillment to use my skills, my gifts. I think that's the primary reason. Another reason is to support the family.

> That would be pretty much equal for me. Also, working even in something I probably wouldn't like—that's tough for me and if I needed to do that, that is what I would do. If those two could work together that would be great, but if not, I've worked at other things…the 7-day store on base or things like that, or even substitute teaching, which is not great, but it pays the bills.

Lastly, a retired sailor now working as a computer consultant [Z], stated that he works for the money because "I like what I do and want to get better at it. I like growing with the industry."

Two interviewees, who had never served in the military, cited financial independence from their wife as one reason they were employed. A Lieutenant's husband [T] replied, "I've been working for over ten years now. I want to have my own money and I like to work in general." The second spouse [W], an electrician married for nine years, gave a list of several reasons for his working, including:

> To earn money to pay child support for my son from a previous marriage. To stay current and therefore employable in my field. To enable us to maintain a certain lifestyle. I enjoy working with tools—I'm the "Tim the tool man type"—the bigger the tool, the better. Plus, my wife is a lot more frugal than I am. This gives me more independence, because I would feel imprisoned if I had to live under her ideas of spending the income. Although, I did for a while when we first moved here, and I didn't have a job. I had been working real long, hard hours for several months—I had stayed behind to finish a job in Washington—so when I got here I was really burned out. So, I spent the time fixing up our yard in housing, which was in really bad shape. That was really therapeutic for me and I needed that, because I was really burned out from a lot of stress and long hours and deadlines.

Interestingly, only one spouse [BB] actually stated that his wife didn't make enough money to support the family. He had stayed home with their two children at a previous command after leaving the Navy, because his wife was working on a rotating schedule that precluded the use of ordinary daycare. This couple's experience, having to

live on half of their dual-military income for two years, was enough to convince this spouse that he had to find a job once his wife returned to a normal working schedule.

6. Most Spouses Have Encountered Difficulty in Finding Suitable Employment

Over sixty percent (14 of 23) of the spouses admitted having experienced difficulty finding suitable employment during their time as a civilian spouse. Nine husbands reported no difficulty finding employment. Another nine had yet to look for a job or reported that they were already employed at the time they were married to the officer.

In 1992, the difficulties most reported by civilian husbands who responded to the DoD Military Spouse Survey included a lack of available jobs at the current location (59 percent), or within an acceptable salary range (48 percent), or within a reasonable commute (30 percent). [Ref. 28:]

The most common difficulty cited by half of the interviewees in the present study was a lack of appropriate employment opportunities in the vacinity of their wife's duty station (12 of 23). The second and third most-cited problems and their frequencies were that the available jobs paid too little (3), and it took too long to find a suitable job (3).

When asked if he had ever had difficulty finding suitable employment, the former RAF officer [AA] shared how his experience had affected him:

> Yes, every time. Once it took seven months. It was a very harming situation because I was used to having a career. It was also very difficult financially in such a high cost area like Monterey. It got to the point I was actually considering where I could flip burgers. The problem with that is, that a job like that would have interfered with any serious job search process, which is a full-time job. It is also very difficult on the spouse who doesn't understand what you are going through. She thinks you're home watching soaps or something, since there is nothing to show for your

efforts, when in actuality it takes a lot of effort to research jobs, send resumes and make phone calls. I kept a log of what I did each day so we would have something to talk about at the end of the day when she came home.

An ex-Army enlisted man [EE] recounted how both the location and time it took to find a job affected his wife and him emotionally:

> We endured a separation of six months when she was out here and I couldn't find a job. Timing is always a factor, as is location. [The move has] not affected me career wise, but from a negative way emotionally. I think the separation affected both of us. With me, the only problem that can arise is that I'm a very senior civilian, and so, at my grade level, jobs are few and far between. So, that in the future might pose a problem. There are places, that to find a job I might have to accept something a little less. That is where the decision making process of me retiring will come in. This is common when the spouse is a DoD employee, since DoD does have that spousal preference program. Generally, when you enter into that you are agreeing to accept a position at a lower grade level up to your present grade level, and usually that doesn't happen. I think the separation affected both of us from a self-esteem stand point.

A retired Navy SEAL [O], who holds two graduate degrees, found himself under-employed due to a lack of opportunities within the local area where his wife was a student:

> In Monterey there were no technical firms. Writing math textbooks for a publisher at $15 an hour was what I ended up with. It doesn't affect my self-esteem working beneath my capabilities. After a year I found a job which required a two-hour commute, so I lived up there a few days a week.

An ex-Air Force officer [Y] with a Management Information Systems (MIS) background recounted his experience:

> I hadn't found anything for a long time, and had about 70 resumes out in Bremerton before I finally got a bite. Actually, it wasn't too bad a job, it paid well, and was somewhat in my career field. It was part-time. It worked out fine, because it gave me time to do things and we were only there about seven months. That was a little discouraging, because it was my first real job search out of the military, and going to a few interviews

> and having so many resumes out...here I thought I was very marketable with a background in computer science, and masters in MIS, and having such a hard time finding a job was discouraging. But, I got down here and it was quick so, I think location was more a factor than anything else. I was glad I didn't have to undergo that two-hour commute to San Jose because I found something down here.

Ten spouses mentioned the emotional turmoil these employment problems caused, ranging from frustration and discouragement to low self-esteem. One TC spouse [M] commented on how a lack of variety in employment opportunities at his wife's remote location affected his self-esteem:

> Yes, it affected my self-esteem. I think there was a lot of frustration and anger not doing what I really wanted to do, not having a choice. Not like if I was in a big city, I wouldn't be angry at myself for choosing something I didn't like if I knew there was something better, because there really wasn't in my eyes, anything better than what I was doing. The last duty station was almost totally devoid of any opportunities. It was 30 percent unemployment in the town. The only jobs that were available were teaching and government civilian positions on base. So, that was probably the worst location. There was anger, frustration, anxiety about wanting to change stations to get to a place with more opportunities like here, or San Diego.

An electrician [W], who had no military background, talked about his difficulties with the local union and its affect on his self-esteem:

> Hawaii had a different union structure, which did not guarantee employment if you were not a local member. The locals had priority. When the employment situation turned down after two years, all the guys from the mainland were laid off by the union for six months. That wasn't very good and started my conflict with the union. That wouldn't have happened in another area. Hawaii is almost like another country in how the unions are run, a very totalitarian regime. It was very frustrating, although it did not impact my self-esteem...well, maybe a little bit, but nothing over-arching. But, just being frustrated didn't help, so I wound up going to work for an engineering company as an inspector.

One enlisted veteran [V] thought his initial employment difficulties motivated him to improve his skills:

> When I first got out of the Army in Pensacola the market wasn't very friendly. I took several minimum wage jobs until I could get into government service and be eligible to transfer around with my wife. It takes 2-to-3 years to get a good job, because you are forced to prove your expertise. By the time you do this, it is time to move again. This frequent relocating is harder on the spouse because the military member still gets regular promotions, and pay, and all the checks in the right boxes, while the spouse has to start over, taking a cut in pay and seniority. It made me more determined to pursue other avenues such as self-improvement and education, so that I could open up more doors in the next location if the market isn't so friendly. Yes, it affected my self-esteem since it was frustrating. I had to work two jobs to try and compensate for my old military pay.

Similarly, an ex-Navy officer [U] had this to say about his transition to the civilian labor market:

> The two years we were in Norfolk, the only job openings I could find were for insurance sales. I wanted something in management or corporate sales. Or, the other jobs available just didn't pay enough. It was kind of depressing being unemployed. But fortunately, I was still drilling in the reserves. It did not affect my self-esteem.

Another spouse [E] was frustrated by the labor market in Norfolk:

> Yes, when I first got out of the Navy. The pay available wasn't as good and there were too many people. All the jobs were in Washington or that area, and we were in Norfolk. Eventually, I took a job which required me to travel two weeks at a time. It was very frustrating, but I went with the flow and realized that just being frustrated wasn't going to get me a job. So, I reassessed the situation and found something.

An ex-Navy enlisted man [FF] talked about how a lack of stability in one area impeded his long-term goal of owning his own construction company. Although he usually found employment rather quickly, he described the emotional and financial toll he paid:

> It is just very frustrating starting at the bottom each time and taking the pay cut. I'm good at what I do, so it doesn't usually take me too long to prove myself and get promoted.

Another former sailor [D] described the frustration and humiliation of having to work at a job he never would have considered during his 13 years on active duty:

> Oh, yes! It was very frustrating, having to do something I never thought I would do. I went and sold cars for a year and a half. That's something I said I would never do. I used to see kids in the Navy who worked part-time doing that, and I said, no way...and low and behold, there I was rather than be on my hands and knees with my neighbor doing concrete floors. That wasn't for me for the next ten years. So, I would never wish being a car salesman on my worst enemy.

A majority of the employed spouses (14 of 19) described their present employment situation as career-enhancing. One spouse felt he was under-employed and four others described their situation as "treading water" until their wife was either reassigned or separated from the military. These five individuals cited the short length of time they would be able to work in the area as a prohibitive factor in finding career-enhancing positions. As the comments illustrate, periodic moves every few years affect the civilian spouse's ability to gain longevity and experience within an organization. Sometimes the trailing spouse is forced to accept an entry-level position or job in an unrelated field due to financial necessity. In the long-term, frequent relocation may slow one's career progression. One spouse's [O] comment summed up this issue nicely:

> My current position is career-enhancing. But, moving every two years is not career-enhancing at all. My growth and resume is like a saw-toothed blade, due to being in an area 0-2 years at a time. I never have time to get any longevity, thus I'm always the new kid on the block.

7. Employers Are Very Understanding When Spouses Require Time Off to Care for Their Children

Twelve of 20 fathers were employed full-time for pay. Nearly all replied that their employer was very understanding when they requested time off unexpectedly to care for their children. Four of the 12 spouses were self-employed or tele-commuted from home and set their own work schedules. For instance, one stay-at-home care-giver [R], who worked part-time out of his home, explained:

> I set my own schedule to meet deadlines. He has things that he wants done, and right now, I'm about a month behind of what he expected. But, at the same time, he is dependent on what I do. I write computer programs for his employees to use, and produce reports for them twice a month that he sends out to clients. From the aspect of the reports, they must be done pretty quickly. But otherwise I'm a month behind and he's very understanding.

Six husbands were employed in professional positions allowing them the flexibility to either set their own hours or catch up on work in the evening or on weekends. The exceptions were two spouses employed in a blue collar job. Both of these men considered their employers to be only somewhat understanding. A construction foreman [FF] explained why his wife must handle child-care emergencies:

> I don't leave, because then there is no one left to do my job. If she leaves, there are others willing to step in and do her job while she is gone. In my business, there are not too many people educated enough...my guys fall apart if I'm not there, not necessarily to tell them what to do, because they do their jobs well, but if I'm not there to take the heat off them from the other bosses, they can't get their jobs done.

Several interviewees commented that their immediate supervisors had children of their own, which made them more understanding. One spouse [T] said his boss was very understanding because:

> My boss is female and has her own kids. She has been through it all before, so she understands the things happening to me. I think it's easier having a female boss, more understanding of these sorts of things.

8. One Third of the Spouses Used the Employment Assistance Program, With Mixed Satisfaction

A majority of spouses (22 of 32) affirmed that they were aware of what the Family Services Center (FSC) had to offer. Seven of the interviewees were not familiar with the programs and three spouses erroneously included certain Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs, including the Child Development Centers (CDCs), under the auspices of the FSC. Just under half (15 of 32) had actually used a service. Of the spouses who had used the FSC, five reported that they were satisfied with the service or program used, seven were unsatisfied, and three said they were neutral. The most often-cited program was the Spouse Employment Assistance Program (SEAP), of which 11 of 15 spouses had participated.

The interviewees generally had mixed opinions about their experiences with SEAP. Three spouses were satisfied or thought the resources available were helpful. A retired Air Force officer [Y], currently employed in a computer-related field, compared his experiences with SEAP in two locations:

> They had a better job board here than in Bremerton, where I wasn't successful in getting a job through them. It was helpful here at Monterey. It had up-to-date postings and was a great resource. The guy I talked to here seemed to be real well in tune with what was going on. They had choices broken out into different areas.

A former Navy officer [U], who failed to be promoted to Lieutenant Commander, used the program during his transition into the civilian job market. He responded that he was not currently familiar with what the FSC had to offer because his wife is stationed at

a remote recruiting command. However, he availed himself of the job search service in Norfolk and thought the resume-writing assistance was helpful. Another ex-Navy officer [E] had this to say about the FSC programs:

> I'm aware of most of them. We used stuff dealing with kid issues. Plus, we attended an orientation to the TRICARE [new commercially provided medical] system. I used the spouse employment assistance in Norfolk, which was really good and helpful with suggestions. They provided help with filling out the government forms and resumes. Plus, there were job fairs available.

The other eight spouses were not as satisfied with SEAP, although many recognized that location probably was a factor in their employment outcome. One spouse [W], who is an electrician, explained:

> I used the SEAP program here. It was not extremely helpful. It was very modestly helpful—the actions undertaken there did not get me a job. I suppose, if it helped at all, it may have helped motivate me to look, but I don't really think it made a difference. I had hoped to use it to get into a military construction job, but there weren't any in this area. So, that wasn't so much the fault of the FSC as it was the location.

Another TC spouse [M], with an education and religious ministries background, had difficulty finding suitable employment at the remote Marine Corps base where his Navy wife was stationed. He described the resources available:

> They had job search by computer for government service jobs. A couple of times I went to look up jobs on the computer and to network. The program wasn't very helpful, probably because of where we were. Because, a lot of them seemed to be more technically oriented or they would put me in a real geographic disadvantage. I would have been hundreds of miles away. So, I worked with MWR for awhile.

Several other spouses responded that the information offered was not very useful for professionals. One spouse [BB], currently employed by DoD in a technical position, responded that he had used the FSC on occasion, but went on to say:

> Now I've lost interest in them, because they are pretty much junk. I tried to use their job-hunting service. It wasn't terribly realistic. At our last duty station it seemed that everything they had was aimed at getting someone to be a checker at the commissary. And here, the job hunting thing wasn't productive. The other services seem to be oriented at the young stay-at-home mother.

A former Marine officer [J] reaffirmed this notion:

> I used the job search data base you can plug into, but it wasn't very helpful because it was real basic...like truck driver positions wanted. No real jobs available for college graduates that applied to what I was looking for.

Similarly, a retired officer [O], who holds two graduate degrees, gave his opinion of the FSC:

> The programs are very effective for a 20-year old with three kids, paying bills on an E-4 paycheck. But, there is no way in hell that they could help you find a CEO position or an executive job. The people at FSC are very friendly, cooperative, and all geared toward helping the uneducated at the E-4 level who are barely existing above the poverty level, trying to avoid bankruptcy. They always try to get you a straight hourly paying job, not even thinking in the $60K range. Their ads are for stupid jobs. They are probably inexperienced with dealing with more educated spouses. They seem to be focused on the lower level employment opportunities.

This spouse [O] continued by giving a suggestion for improving the program:

> One thing I did notice is that the job program is basically aimed at non-professional or non-technical fields...and just looking around and meeting some of the dependent spouses, there are a lot of professionals and technical expertise available...that they could almost be running a professional consulting office if they tapped into some of this experience.

Another spouse [AA], with an engineering background, had higher hopes for the employment assistance service:

> I used the program, but it was useless as a search mechanism for me. They were focused on helping people write resumes, and allowed spouses to use their computer to write them. I was expecting them to help civilians find a job at, or near NPS.

Two spouses commented on the resume-writing assistance available at the local FSC in Monterey. The first [P], a self-employed general contractor, had entertained the idea of getting what he called a "real job." He explained his motivation for taking the class and his disappointment with the outcome:

> I probably talk better than I write, because my thoughts are all so fast. So, I took a little writing thing that they had, to write as you speak. I was 50-50 happy with their services. It was like, "Well, you've taken the class, did what you did, and that's good enough. Well, you are the teacher. Tell me whether the resume is going to do me any good, critique it for me." There was no feedback that way. They didn't really care. It was just, you did it, so there. Excuse me! Their attitude was "Thank God you showed up!" Why offer the class if nobody comes?

The second spouse [D], a former enlisted man, had this to say:

> I know that they do resumes and they have programs for the children. I think that's a pretty good setup down there. I've talked to them a couple of times, and I don't think the guy doing resumes has a clue, but...I talked to them when we first got here about doing a resume, but I wasn't real...don't get me wrong, he was one of the nicest guys you would ever want to meet, but he didn't give me a warm fuzzy feeling about the way he was going to be writing the resume. He was writing it more like an evaluation, like with bullets and stuff...and that freaked me out after ten years of writing evaluations myself. It just looked a little too military for me.

A few interviewees had formed an opinion of the services without actually using them, through "word of mouth" reputation. One former Marine officer [K], who was vaguely aware of what the FSC had to offer, replied:

> I've browsed through the stuff. A couple that used to work for me used their services. The impression I get, is that its more geared towards the enlisted family members. I'm not trying to be snobby, but with the education level of officers, it doesn't really make sense to go in to learn basic financial management of your checkbook.

Another Marine [R], retired after a full 20-year career, said that he knew programs were available, but:

> My sense of them is that they really don't have anything to offer me. They have a community center in housing that the kids go to now and then. I'm not quite sure what family services offers. But, having been through it all from both sides, we have the experience to deal with the demands and stress that arises.

9. Spouses Are Concerned that Their Wives Might Be Sexually Harassed and/or Discriminated Against While in the Military

Spouses were asked, "How concerned are you that your wife might be sexually harassed while in the military?" and given three response options, "Very Concerned," "Somewhat Concerned," or "Not at All." The idea was to test whether husbands, who are conditioned by society to protect their partners, had given much thought to this issue.

Forty percent of the spouses (13 of 32) considered themselves to be very or somewhat concerned that their wife might be sexually harassed or discriminated against. The vast majority of spouses were resigned to the inevitability of it happening, or stated that their wife had, in fact, already suffered either harassment or discrimination. These spouses made it clear, however, that they trusted their wives to handle the situation appropriately. For instance, a former Marine officer [R] said he was somewhat concerned about the issue for two reasons:

> The first is the inevitability of it, and when you say sexual harassment, I'm not sure if we are talking about physical danger or emotional danger or just discrimination. It's just a fact of life. She's put up with it all her career, and I've witnessed some of it when we were stationed together on at least one occasion. I guess my concerns are more towards it's effect on her career, at least as far as it has manifested itself to date. She hasn't been physically affected that I know of, however, all the other things that go along with it, such as promotion and relations on the job. The way it affects her, and her career is the biggest concern, and her ability to progress.

Another spouse [Y], married to a Navy Lieutenant Commander, replied:

> Well, she has been so, I think she can pretty much take care of herself. She's a fighter, she won't take it sitting down. It's really dependent on the command climate.

Another interviewee [S] believed that his wife's physical stature and seniority would protect her from being harassed in the future, so he was unconcerned:

> I think one of the things my wife has going for her is that a six-foot tall woman is probably less likely to be physically harassed. I think if she were a petite 5'2'' blond then that would be a factor, because men, if they are in a position, they will be less likely to harass a physically capable woman. These predators like to prey on the weak and people they feel aren't going to resist. If they can get away with it, they will test the waters first, and I know my wife wouldn't tolerate any of this stuff as an O-4, and doesn't now. So, I've never felt uncomfortable with her being sexually harassed.

Another veteran spouse [D] was somewhat concerned:

> I'm concerned only because she seems to be very quiet, and you would think that someone who is going to sexually harass, especially a senior person, would think that because she's quiet that she would be a good target and not say anything. But, I think that he would be in for a real rude awakening. I don't think any physical things would happen, because I think she's just stronger than that, and more verbal than that. But, yes, I could see where someone senior might think that she would be an easy target.

Sixty percent (19 of 32) of the men interviewed were not at all concerned about the issue of sexual harassment. Three spouses admitted that they had given very little thought to the issue for various reasons, including one former Marine [N] who replied:

> It helps that she is a field grade officer in the Marine Corps, there's not that many field grade officers with an opportunity for a whole lot of harassment. Plus, at this point, she has enough experience that she doesn't put up with it. And lastly, it's partly of my naiveté, because when I was on active-duty—she's told me some of the stories that have happened to her when she was a junior officer, as a Second Lieutenant—and I could never imagine myself doing those things. I was shocked that there were officers that would do such things. So, I'm not concerned.

A TC spouse [W] married to a senior officer explained:

> I've not really thought about that. I guess I'm not really concerned. She would probably give him a black eye or kick 'em in the shin.

The third spouse [CC], married to a Lieutenant Commander, responded:

> I've never really thought about it, but I think she can take care of herself. She was actually sexually harassed and brought suit against the individual, which didn't pan out to the degree she hoped it would.

Two husbands said they were unconcerned because they believed that their wives could control whether or not they allowed themselves to be harassed or discriminated against. The first [I] responded confidently:

> Not at all. I hate to say that women bring it on themselves, but to the extent that they do, she doesn't. And, I think things have changed and people just don't do it so much anymore. That problem is going away.

The second spouse [FF], who admitted he is very protective of his wife and won't allow men in the military to mistreat her, stated:

> She will never put herself in that position. I'm sure she feels that she has been sexually harassed but, it doesn't affect her. She stays on an even keel and keeps going. I'm not concerned. Now, before she married me, she had a real bad problem with it. But, once you get married, and you are a team and always together, and most people who see you who are in the military, respect your marriage. Especially in the officer ranks, they are educated differently than enlisted folks, it's night and day, it really is. The officers, even the male officers, try to respect the woman's marital status. They don't give her a hard time or use the fact that she's a woman against her in anyway. What I can see.

Five interviewees said they were very concerned over this issue. Three of these five spouses had no military background. For this minority, the media is a key influence on their opinions. The extensive media attention given to recent events, including the Navy's Tailhook scandal and the Army's Aberdeen recruit training problems, simply

feeds into these individuals' concerns, exacerbating their lack of personal experience upon which they have to base their judgments. One TC spouse [T] confirmed:

> I'm somewhat concerned, based on the news I am hearing on TV and reading in the newspaper. I think overall, any woman who is in the military is somewhat vulnerable to sexual harassment. I think even some guys.

Another TC spouse [M], married to a Navy chaplain, told this story:

> I'm very concerned because she already has been, in a sense that one guy did it to everyone he worked with, any woman he could intimidate. So, I've already experienced that and know that it is very real. And, it was very shocking to have it happen right in front of me! My wife knew it happened and thought it was dumb. He asked her to dance and made a suggestive gesture right in front of me. I didn't think anything of it while he was dancing with her, and afterwards, she made this screwed up face and told me what he said to her. So, it was very real for me and it made me very angry and very frustrated. It was kind of like, "Do I say something or is it going to hurt your career?" But, I guess now I'm a bit wiser as a spouse, because it helps me to draw the line and not back down again. And, I have confronted an O-6 and called him on it and he was furious with my wife. But, that was something I worked through the chain of command. Yeah, that was a touchy one. I think what made it so difficult for us was the hit and miss situation of my job, and my self-esteem level was pretty low then. So, it made it even harder. The gap was even wider than if I had been working full-time and things would have been more equal. But as it was, I really had to reach up to see what was going on and decide if I should say something. Whereas, if my employment had been different, it would have been a lot quicker response on my part. It would have been different because she could have gotten out, and I could have taught, and she could have been a pastor somewhere. But, that wasn't an option then.

A retired Navy officer [O] said he was very concerned because:

> I know she will, it's a given. She's strong and powerful and would jam it down their throats. I'm not worried about her actions. It's sort of like being attacked by a lion in Africa, it could happen but I don't worry about it.

A former Army soldier [EE] was very concerned about his wife being discriminated against. He had a keen insight into this issue and the unique position a male spouse has:

> I think, when we talk about a male spouse...I think being able to stand back and watch the way that you see your wife treated and interacted with by her male peers and male counterparts is sometimes disturbing. Simply from the perception standpoint, and maybe some of the underlying and subtle prejudices that still exist out there. That, to me, is a unique thing that I think only the male, if he is willing to open up his eyes and look at it, that doesn't have the problems themselves, can see. I don't think in a sense that the female spouses do that. I think in many ways they are ingrained with their husband's mentality. I think that [issue] still needs to be very, very strongly addressed. Personally, I don't think that it is addressed as strongly as it should be. That is my observation, but I see it all the time, and you hear it all the time in little subtle things. So, I think from a male standpoint, you are privy to disturbing things from the male officers that the female officers generally don't hear. It's a lot like you are in a group of white guys and everyone feels free to talk about racial things in a wholly strange manner that you generally don't see when everyone is interacting somewhere else. I think that needs to be emphasized more through projects, better supervision, better training, social groups and better interactions.

10. Spouses Most Often Mentioned a Lack of Peers or Social Network as a Disadvantage

Interviewees were asked if they felt there are any disadvantages to being a male civilian spouse. Slightly over 23 percent (7 of 30) thought there were no disadvantages to their position—two did not give an answer. Those who believed there were disadvantages gave various reasons; however, some of the replies would be equally disadvantageous to a female spouse in the same position.

Twelve interviewees stated that their status as a male spouse, and consequently as one of the minority, resulted in a lack of peers and/or reduced the available social network available to them. This was the number one disadvantage given in terms of

frequency of response. A list of the top three disadvantages and their frequencies of occurrence include:

1. Lack of support network and/or peer group—12
2. Frequent moves and/or career disruption—9
3. Being mistaken for the active-duty spouse—5

A 12-year Army veteran [EE] said he would like to see the support programs updated to more closely match the changing demographics in the military. He correctly pointed out:

> More and more males are becoming civilian spouses of military people, and although maybe our social interaction requirements aren't the same as the female spouses, there's a lack of those types of things for us. And again also, we are not generally stay-at-home, and that may be a stereotype, in a sense, because many of the spouses don't work, and so, some of those things just have not been thought of as needed for the male spouses.

One interviewee [Y] was married to an aviation maintenance officer who deployed in the past. He agreed that there seems to be more of a support network for female spouses:

> Most of the spouse clubs are still referred to as wives clubs. The Lincoln and VP squadron changed the club's name to "spouses" because of me. In that aspect, and female spouses don't have an idea of how to take us, it's a little different for them, especially if they aren't used to a male being there in their club. So, we're kind of outsiders that way. A man who participates in these events is a novelty. There haven't been that many years that there have been male civilian spouses.

Another spouse [O] pointed out a common practice that works against the civilian husband:

> Men don't get invited to spouse functions because the women don't know what to do with them. And, how do I approach a wives' tea? It doesn't bother me to be in the minority, even if I'm the only guy present.

One Lieutenant's husband [AA], who was consistently involved in his wife's career through social interactions with command personnel, admitted that male spouses are:

> Not accepted in the wives club. There are not many events to get involved in as a male. You are left on your own a lot more. Plus, military men do not want a male spouse hanging around their wives. It makes them uncomfortable.

A few spouses mentioned the lack of a peer group as a possible disadvantage, although not necessarily for them personally. For example, one self-employed business owner [G] considered this a disadvantage because "in social settings there are no equivalents, other professional spouses to network with." However, a retired Navy officer [B], who was attending school full-time, said:

> It doesn't bother me being the only male spouse at a command, since I've spent many years in my professional life without peers. That would not bother me if that is the case.

A stay-at-home dad for the past 12 years [L] came to the realization that there are some advantages to his position as a male spouse, although initially he could only think of disadvantages:

> In the military community you don't fit into either peer group, either the military spouses group, or the predominately male military member group. Although, I am personally able…I can pretty much mix with both crowds. I guess early on, I felt somewhat ostracized from the female members to the extent that you don't go out and pursue those relationships. I don't have the intimate contact with other career equals that I would have, either military or civilian spouse, because I stay at home. The more I think about it now…it used to be a problem, and it can be a problem, but I think, now, I can sit down with a group of the female spouses, because I've been recognized as a successful homemaker (laugh).

When discussing disadvantages, five spouses mentioned the fact that they were commonly mistaken for an active-duty member. One prior enlisted man [X] pointed out that it is difficult to change a culture used to a predominately female-spouse population:

> A disadvantage is that I'm referred to as Mrs. Chris...whenever things come in the mail for the spouse, because they figure my wife is a male. This continued to happen even after we told them that I was a male spouse, but it eventually got fixed.

A TC spouse [P], married to a chaplain, hated when people assumed he was the one in the military:

> If I keep a short haircut I can get anything I want, basically. I'm nobody, but apparently they think I must be somebody if I keep this short haircut. A disadvantage to that assumption, is that I'm supposed to be someone important...don't ask me the questions, don't hold me accountable for my wife's actions! I don't know what she's doing. I know we are going to a function, but I don't know what she has planned for it.

He also shared a story about how this mistaken assumption in the military destroys professionalism:

> One instance that comes to mind is a time we were pulling into the gate at the base and were under condition bravo, so ID's were being checked. I have my ID and my wife's picture, which is about ten years old, with long hair, etc. And, the guy looks at it and says, "Well sir, who's the babe?" And I say, "Well, it's her." Because, if my card is a dependent card, then that makes her who?...the active-duty LT...oh, no! The guy is suddenly kicking his heals and standing at attention. And, my wife is flabbergasted and thinking, "Thanks for the compliment, however, that's not appropriate." He was not having a good time, but I'm here, and there's a babe. All my wife could see was his legs and the sudden change in stature. It was cute. I took it as a compliment, but she wasn't impressed. Sure, it's guy talk, but the time and place were wrong. You're on duty, not freelancing. Hopefully he learned, no one ever said anything.

A retired officer [B], and civilian spouse of two years, wasn't bothered when this sort of thing happened to him:

> On base, I'm frequently mistook for the one going to school at NPS or whatever. I'm neutral or ambivalent about that mistaken assumption when it happens. I usually fix it, explain that my wife is the one going to school. It occurs, but I think it is probably natural that people make the assumption, because there are more men in the military. But, if you are blind-sided and have to make an assumption, then you do the "50-50-90" and assume that the guy is the student around here because the consequences of that are minimal.

A former Marine [K] remarked that people he encounters on base seem surprised that he is a dependent. For instance:

> When I go to the commissary, because I keep my hair short enough, I could be Air Force or Navy depending on the individual. So, they still assume its me until they see the dependent ID card. I haven't felt any prejudice or anything, but it's just obvious that there is surprise there.

Another retiree [S], married to an Admiral, found it funny how people's assumptions often lead them into trouble:

> Another thing I've noticed at social engagements primarily, is that I'm mistaken for the Admiral. All they know is that an Admiral and spouse are coming, and now that things are gender neutral, and particularly with our names, which can go either way, it is easy to make the obvious assumption. After a couple of hours I tell them that I'm not. But as soon as they find out I'm not the Admiral, it's interesting to see how some people react and sort of drop you like a hot potato and go for the Admiral. They go for the power and the position.

Other spouses, including a former Marine [J], talked about feeling alienated or receiving a lack of respect:

> You're kind of an anomaly, you will stand out, especially if you grow your hair out long. Coming from active-duty, I do know that active-duty males tend to look down on male spouses, "Okay, we know who wears the pants in the family and stuff like that." I know for a fact, that it helps me out having prior service and still being in the reserves, just knowing what the military is all about. I guess it's just as odd, to me, seeing a military spouse like me. We go to little company socials or whatever, and my wife stuck out like a sore thumb because she was in the military. It's like, "What's your problem? You don't like knitting or whatever, doing the creative mothering things." And, it wasn't until she had a baby that she

> heard, "You are a woman!" I don't think that society, or the military society, really knows how to deal with these issues very well. It's like, "Is something wrong here?" It's more like an attitude, a vibe if you will. It's being kind of an anomaly I guess.

One TC spouse [M] and his chaplain-wife were fairly new to the military. He described a feeling of alienation and loss of identity professionally because:

> It's easy to categorize military personnel by their insignia, but if I look at a spouse, I don't even know if you are a spouse, because you are just like me if I have my hair cut short. They think I belong here if I get a crew cut. So, that is the downside, not having a real strong identity as a spouse.

Only eight individuals specifically mentioned frequent moves, and their detrimental effect on their employment opportunities, as a disadvantage. Of this group, one spouse [Q] was unemployed and attending school part-time, but had definite concerns about his future career prospects and taking over the title of "bread-winner":

> Well, I feel the career thing is a really big issue in our future. I'm not sure where it's going to lead us with my career. We've talked about settling down in Washington hopefully. And if we don't, because she can't and we have to move around every few years, I don't know how that will affect us in the future. I know it will. Because, she is the breadwinner right now, but in a few years down the road, eventually I want to be working and established as the bread-winner and bringing home income for the family. Eventually, that might be a problem. At this point, I don't think it's a problem. I think it's an opportunity. That's something we will have to deal with in the future, that I'm pretty concerned with.

It is noteworthy that more than half (13 of 20) of the employed spouses did not consider the frequent moves a disadvantage. In one case, the officer planned to leave the Navy so that moving wouldn't be an issue in the future. However, the remaining 12 spouses had confidence that they had the skills to find a job anywhere their wife might be stationed, or they had been lucky in the past.

Of the seven husbands who cited frequent relocating as a disadvantage, the issue was either the time necessary to find a new position or the drop in pay usually associated with starting over in a new organization. In one spouse's [U] words, "It takes someone 2-to-5 years to get established in a career, but one is not often left in a location that long." Yet, one former Marine [N] explained that there was also an advantage to being a so-called "trailing spouse":

> Frequent moves have prevented me from taking permanent government positions, which are full-time benefited positions. So, I've had to take highly paid, professional, temporary-worker positions, even though I was at one place four years. So, you're acting the whole time, and that has advantages and disadvantages. You're free from having to deal with all the civilian personnel bureaucracy, the whole HRO/general service issues. But, since you are tied to getting only straight salary, you can negotiate your salary. You are not tied to the salary bands of permanent benefited positions. The disadvantage is you don't get the benefits. I can't take a lot of positions that require you, in the city manager field, to sign an intent to remain in the position for 24 months up front. There's that professional obligation that precludes me from taking some jobs. On the other hand, you are in a strong position to fill jobs at organizations who are looking to change, seeking a change agent. That is really useful for me career-wise and for those government directors and political boards who need that type of person to come in and be the bad guy. So, it's a two-edged sword that you can either grab or be cut by it.

11. Spouses Report Many Advantages to Their Situation

Interviewees were asked what advantages, if any, they found in their position as a male civilian spouse. Only three thought there were no advantages to their position. One of these spouses [Q] likened his position to that of a husband married to a woman in the corporate world. The majority of spouses, however, found something advantageous to their position, whether they were currently employed or house husbands. Fifteen reasons were given, although most of the them would be equally advantageous to a female spouse

in a similar position (e.g., military benefits and security). Nine spouses gave interesting responses, including a British man [AA] who was not ashamed to take advantage of his uniqueness. In his opinion, male spouses are "different beings, a talking point at social events, so that people more easily remember your wife."

Three men realized that their gender brought with it a certain "master status" that transcended any disadvantage of being a military dependent or one of the minority. One spouse [EE] astutely commented:

> It is a male-dominated world, in many ways a male-dominated service, so being male tends to be an advantage also. You are still, no matter how you look at it,...there is still an "old boys club" out there in the military, and whether I am a male spouse or what, there is still an acceptance level that is not generally there for female spouses. Plus, I'm usually employed. So, as a male you usually have your own income.

Similarly, another retired Navy spouse [O] replied:

> In general, males make more money than females because society pays more to men for similar work. As a spouse, I don't get pushed around in medical like the average dependent wife. I'm bold enough to complain to the department head in the office. Men are generally more assertive since they are conditioned through sports as opposed to women's socialization.

And a former enlisted corpsman [L] responded:

> I'm pretty well accepted in both crowds, because I remember at the last command, since I'm not the normal spouse, there is no ceiling to my...there's no rank. One of my best friends at that command, and we used to go golfing all the time, was the CO. There was no intimidation on my part because he was the CO. Neither did he have to shield himself because I wasn't one of his subordinates. We enjoyed the time talking. And in a way, what turned out to be the first big disadvantage [being a male spouse], turned out to be an advantage, because there doesn't have to be that separation imposed by rank. I think this evolved in my mind over time, as I matured and got used to my situation.

One spouse [X], whose wife frequently deploys for several months at a time, realized that he had an advantage because he was male. The female spouses often turned to him in emergencies or with routine maintenance problems while their husbands were at sea. He replied, "Her previous CO felt reassured that I was there to help the other wardroom spouses, and I'm glad to help."

A former Army enlisted veteran [V] compared his situation as a civilian husband to the demands he would face if still in the military. In that frame of reference, he saw only advantages to being a civilian spouse:

> I get to meet new friends every time we move; find new golf buddies; and develop friendships that last a lifetime. Moving also provides opportunities for new experiences in each location, since I have more time and flexibility to enjoy outside activities, such as coaching little league football and spending time with my son.

Three interviewees were married to officers working in communities that do not require sea duty. Two former Navy officers were married to fleet support officers at the time they decided to leave the service. A former cryptologist [I] commented: "with her jobs and designator [fleet support], the travel and separation is not such an issue, which is probably unique within the Navy." Similarly, the second spouse [E] echoed:

> My wife is a fleet support officer, she has no sea time, so we have the benefits of the Navy and of serving the country, without being torn away from family 6-to-9 months at a time, and all the detractions of separation. Males have all the deploying jobs, which cheats them from seeing their kids.

A retired Marine officer [R] observed:

> Basically, the only one I'm beholden to is my wife and her needs, and to a much greater extent, what my children have in mind for me. It is a far more controlled situation in a lot of ways than having been in the military, especially in the last ten years when there are people turning around and leaving every six months. Yes, she might have to go, but that would be a

> change. During the seven years we were married on active-duty, she never had to emergency deploy, not because she was a woman, but primarily because she was in a billet that didn't require it. And, that was just luck. My responsibilities now are more local rather than global. If she had to run off, so be it, it doesn't really change what I have to do that much. I'm just glad it's not me deploying.

12. Most Spouses Are Invited to Join a Spouse Club, But Few Actually Do

A majority of the men (24 of 32) in the sample received an invitation to join a spouse club. However, only 34 percent (11 of 32) actually went to a meeting or attended an event sponsored by the group. Interviewees were invited by various means—11 by personal invitation from another spouse, six via open invitation in newsletters, and one by virtue of his wife's military position. Six others responded that they were invited but did not say by what means.

The 66 percent (21 of 32) who had not attended one of these spouse groups, gave various reasons for not participating. The top four reasons given—six spouses did not provide a reason—included:

1. No need or not considered useful as a support mechanism—6
2. Employment conflicts with events—3
3. Not interested—4
4. Have other support networks—2

The following interview excerpts elaborate on the reasons why husbands do not participate in the spouse clubs. Most interviewees provided more than one reason. For instance, an ex-enlisted homemaker [D], known throughout his neighborhood as the "unofficial welcome committee for housing," explained why he doesn't participate:

> If someone moves in to the neighborhood, I'm always the first one to greet them and let them know where we are if they have any problems. That's just me, I'm an out-going extrovert. I wouldn't attend the spouses clubs. I think it is just a bunch of people who get together who want to complain and whine. I understand that is not the intent of the club. The intent is to

> give each other support, but there ends up being more complaining. I relate it to the first class petty officer's association where I was at. I was the president of this organization and just couldn't stand it, because no body wanted to do anything. They wanted to complain and get things off their chest. If it was used properly, and had the proper leadership with it, I think it could be a real good thing. If these people got together and raised their voices together as one and said, "This is what we need." But, I've never seen, since I've been in—whether the enlisted spouses or the officer spouses—one good thing come out of those organizations in the past 15 years. I think it's a shame, because I think they could do a lot of good things. But they choose not to.

A former Marine officer's [K] comments were typical of the employed spouses:

> Yes, I got the officers' wives club newsletters. I may have gotten one or two calls early on, but I was working at the time and not really interested. I definitely didn't feel the need for extra adult interaction outside of the workplace.

Similarly, another ex-Marine, [N] now employed full-time, replied:

> Yes, I always receive a form letter and am invited to join by other spouses. Usually, I'll run into one of the wives at the club and they will invite me again. I've attended things like all-hands BBQs and Marine Corps Ball golf events. However, the problem with most spouse club events is that they are scheduled during the day while I'm working, or early in the evening when I'm just getting home, so my work schedule precludes participation in most of them.

Several spouses admitted that they simply had no interest in these social groups for spouses. One spouse [U] was invited to join, but not invited to any of the social events. However, he also replied, "I didn't want to join anyway." A former Navy officer [I] stated:

> You know, I don't think that I was [invited], but it was pretty clear that I wasn't interested. I received some newsletter that always came to the spouse of LCDR..., which I got a kick out of that. There, I suppose I could have if I had wanted to. I'm unaware if any husbands did. Here I'm unaware there is anything.

One prior enlisted husband [FF] deftly avoided answering the question when he remarked, "I don't feel like I'm not supported. Imagine how hard it is for a military wife when her spouse is deployed."

A TC spouse and homemaker [H] for the past nine years explained that he did not have to rely on the spouse club for social interaction:

> I've been invited to every one but, like I said, that's not my thing. I don't believe in the practice of wearing your spouse's rank...and having a pecking order among the spouses. I think it would have affected my self-esteem to be sitting their with the wives doing that sort of thing, when their husbands were away on deployment and I'm at home with my kids. Although, there was always one other guy there to talk to, male officers at the squadron, so I didn't have to depend on the spouse club for social interaction.

One fifty-year-old husband [F], who owned his own business, admitted that he had no time or need for spouse groups. He thought these groups were useful, however, for spouses with time on their hands:

> No, I was never invited to one. We usually do social events together...last year I was under pressure to go to the Navy Ball, because she wanted to go. Actually, I'm too busy to get involved with a spouse club. I really can't imagine myself sitting around in a circle of women talking about what it's like being married to someone in the Navy. (Laugh) Maybe a little of that is our age difference and the fact that I'm too busy. I think that's probably a good thing for someone who doesn't have a real fulfilling life or is not as busy as I am. Too much extra time is not a good thing.

This spouse then speculated on his likely reception if he chose to attend in the future:

> Off the top of my head I think I could probably liven up the group a little bit if I were involved. I could come up with some ideas, and different perspectives on things that would help the club. I wouldn't feel uncomfortable with it. I've had to deal with that in the past when my son was a newborn, and I was a single parent. I took him for swimming lessons and I was the only dad there, and the rest were women with their babies. At first, they were all looking at me like, "What are you doing here?" And in the end, I was kind of standing in the middle with my arms

> out so I could reach out and grab them and help out. The difference goes away, I think, once the newness wears off for everybody involved. A lot of times it's just the different perspective that a male can bring into a group of women...everyone's doing the same job, coming from different worlds more or less.

It is noteworthy that most spouses (17 of 23), whether they attended a spouse club meeting or not, reported that they felt uncomfortable with the experience—nine gave no indication. Of the 11 who participated at least once, all but two felt uneasy or not completely welcome by the female spouse majority. Eight of the spouses who had not attended a meeting stated that it was because they didn't feel comfortable.

An ex-British officer [AA], who livens up any social engagement, said civilian spouses are:

> Not accepted in wives clubs. There are not many events to get involved in as a male. You are left on your own a lot more. Plus, military men do not want a male spouse hanging around their wives. It makes them uncomfortable.

A TC spouse [T] agreed that he might upset the military husbands if he were to attend:

> No, I was not invited, but I received a couple of phone calls to come to certain events. But, I hesitate to go because I'm a guy and don't want to upset their male spouses. Maybe I'm wrong, I don't know, but what makes me uncomfortable is being the only guy—having no one else there like me. I think maybe if I tried attending someday I might enjoy it, maybe not. Maybe the other members would like it. So, maybe I should try before I say anything definite. I might get involved if there were other male members or a separate husband's club if it involved sports, since I'm into sports and cooking.

A retired Marine [R] thought that he would encounter resistance if he attempted to become an active participant in the spouse club:

> The other spouses didn't really invite me, except for the Admiral's husband. Otherwise...it's just there is a stand-offishness that prevails. I

mean, if you really want to see power struggles, go look at the spouse club. There are some women over there who take that stuff pretty seriously and I've never been approached to participate in anything. If I really wanted to get involved, I would have to force my way into it. Which is fine, it really only addresses my guilt at not participating, I guess. But, at the same time, there probably is more than enough to go around. There seems to be plenty of people to participate in all these activities that go on.

A retired enlisted spouse [Z] replied that he had an interest in joining, but was concerned about the reception he would receive:

Yes, invited. I haven't gone to any meetings. I'm not really comfortable. They have the wrong type of events. I do have an interest in it, but I think it would be difficult for me to break into it. But, I would like to try it.

The following quotations are from spouses who actually attended at least one meeting. One TC spouse [M] shared his opinion of these clubs based on his experience at a Marine installation:

Yes, I was invited to teas and outings. There were officer students' and chaplains' wives teas at the school she was at. I thought it would get kind of "womby." Plus, the spouses were from a different generation, so they were into different kinds of interests. I went once to a meeting. They were fairly persistent in their invitations. I wasn't into socializing with women about my "spousal role" or "wifely role." But, here I have already met another male spouse I can relate to, so it may be different.

Another TC chaplain's spouse [P] shared his experience:

Yes, it's a rarity, but I did attend. It's kind of a thing where everyone was afraid of everyone, and the women would only talk to the women, and the guys would come, and the CO's wife would introduce the women to the guys. And, then okay...D's here. But, what I'm getting from that is that I am the cause of the problems on the ship, because my wife is there with their husbands. That's the flip side of why I'm at that spouse meeting. "No, well, I'm here with you, think how your husband's feel? Maybe I'm going to jump on you or something. How does he know? Put him in the same category...that is not what we are here for." Things may happen, but that was the flip side. I get introduced and then I get the sneers and "Your wife is on the boat... ." So, do we want to introduce this guy or not? No, because that means there is a woman on board. There were three of us

> guys in that club. There could have been more, but only three that were active. And one guy took over as president, so they changed the name to "spouse club." Our wives were the first group of women aboard the ship and we ended up as the pillars of the spouse club.

A retired Navy officer [O], who is very outspoken and talkative, attended the spouse club at his wife's duty station because the president was also a male spouse. However, he found himself amazed at the management of the group's finances:

> Yes, in Monterey I went to the first meeting and didn't say much. At the second meeting, I asked how many members there were? About 300, but 150 paid dues, 30 attended the meetings, and ten do all the work. These ten, dedicated spouses worked their tails off baking and setting up the wine- tasting events. They were 100 percent devoted Navy wives, that didn't have a job or anything else to do with their lives. Anyway, when I asked what the club did with the money that was raised, the response was that they just gave it away to scholarships and other things that didn't directly benefit the members who were working to raise the money. I then suggested that, at least part of the money should be used to do something the members would enjoy. Because, I asked the president, "Have you ever been in a club that you don't reap some benefit? Where they just hound you to volunteer?"

Seven spouses discussed their possible interest in attending a separate husbands club if one were available. Although, most were not overly enamored of the idea. One Army veteran [V] indicated that if there were a "husbands club," the events and focus would have to be different:

> I was not invited to join a club, but I was invited to certain events via an open invitation that I was welcome to participate. I would have felt comfortable attending a spouse club, but I wouldn't have attended regularly.... The events are female-oriented, such as craft shows and fashion shows. Guys want to do sporting and golf events...go to baseball games. Male spouse groups would do different types of things, like visiting state parks and attractions that are nearby.

When asked if he would attend a separate husbands club, a former Navy officer [E], now a stay-at-home dad, responded:

> I would be too busy with the kids even if they had a husbands club. I would rather spend the time on my specific hobbies than go to meetings. Attending spouse clubs is not high in priority. Men don't go out looking for these support clubs. We have our own little group of 2-3 guys to do stuff. Studies have shown there are differences between men and women in their interactions. Women need communication and support. That is not interesting men stuff.

The president of the local spouses club [S] gave his views on the probable success of a separate husbands club:

> My gut feeling is that a separate husbands club would not succeed. I think what brings the women together is the fact that they have a common interest in children. Our focus is on the children of the spouses, providing a support group for the Navy families here. A lot of the things we do, about 75 percent of the things, involve the children. The parades, the Easter egg hunt and other things. And, I think that all the female spouses are interested in improving the quality of life for their children. I don't think that the male is willing to have that unifying force...most of them I think, would be interested if a club was to get together to watch Monday night football and drink beer. Then you would have something going. You have to have something that they all share a common interest in. I think the sports factor is important, since men get together to play softball and such as the kids get older. I think as the kids progress into junior high both parents get more involved with sports. Seems more natural to me.

One stay-at-home care-giver [R] commented that he would probably participate to increase his networking capabilities:

> I see that from two perspectives, the opportunity to network, but also the mutual support thing. When you talk about the female spouses supporting each other and the males kind of being left out, then that would be the other side of it. I think that the way it would work, is that you would have a pool of support that is bigger. You know, in housing there are always groups of women who support each other. They have the mutual child-care thing that they do...I've thought about that sometimes. But, it's just that I'm not comfortable with it. I guess if it were husbands, that would make a difference. At the same time, I have a guy who is living close to me who is basically doing the same thing that I am, but there is very little that we do together because we don't relate very well to each other. Quite honestly, there is almost no difference in the relationship I have with him than I have with other women, in fact I have better relationships with some of the wives than with him. It's a personality thing, but if there were a

bigger pool, then the personality thing might work out better. Yes, I think it would make a difference.

A minority of five spouses—two who attended meetings and three who did not—stated that they were comfortable with participating in these groups. One spouse [Y] discussed how he became the first president of a carrier wives club:

> At the first meeting I attended, I was voted to be the president of the Lincoln's club. I'm not sure that I wasn't volunteered into it, or maybe I was the only one not opposed to being the president at the time. The ship had just switched home ports after coming back from deployment, so it was in a big transition phase. I went to the meeting when they were electing officers and asked the question, "What do you have to do as president?" and boom! Although, there was another male spouse participating before the ship relocated, I was the only one afterwards. It was okay being the only male spouse, no real problems. The females I think, all enjoyed it. The commander's wife enjoyed it. She said I was the first male spouse as president of the spouse club for a carrier. I thought that was really neat. The meetings were a bit unorganized, but it was partly disheveled due to the move, with a lot of families being left behind in California. Plus, when they deployed, a lot of the spouses had flown around the country to various places and just stayed there when the ship relocated.

An ex-enlisted sailor [X] shared his experiences with the spouses of the officers from his wife's ship:

> The XO's or CO's wife invited me. With ships, they try to keep up the camaraderie due to the separations and to the deployments, to help pass the time. It was the wives club before I got there, then I was the first male involved. Then they rethought their thinking. I gave a basket-weaving party at my house. Actually, I think the XO's wife volunteered me for it. I didn't basket weave, I just let them use the house and have their fun and make a mess of the house...stuff was flying everywhere! I had hors d'oeuvres. I would never do it again. They tended to have mainly female-oriented events in the club. I actually gave them suggestions that we should go to the Olympics or boogie-boarding or deer hunting, but they didn't care for that. They liked the Olympics idea, but the ship was away. I was just joking about the deer hunting to get their reaction. Their biggest thing is going out to dinner and lunch. I just can't remember anything that ever came out of the meetings! Except that they made posters and care packages when the ship was away and coming back from deployment.

> That's what they do. I guess I'll be involved again when my wife goes back to a ship as a department head next.

This same spouse then explained the awkwardness he encountered initially due to his enlisted background:

> All I know is that coming from the enlisted—I was a machinist mate who worked on engines in my ship's steam plant—and you're not so disciplined down there. So, when you make the switch to being around the wardroom [officers and their wives] you have to mind your P's and Q's...that's been the biggest change. Then, when you get used to it, you can joke around a little bit. That's been the biggest effect, going from enlisted to officer ranks, I guess. Being a male civilian is great.

Another former enlisted sailor [L], married to a Navy nurse, replied that the other wives realized it was advantageous having him around once in awhile:

> Yes, I was invited to events by the neighbors. They would try and include me in what was going on. After awhile, they realized it was beneficial having me around. If they had to move tables they would ask me to help. Manual labor at the tea parties.... It's probably good to have a guy in the group for those women who do have problems arise when their husbands are gone, such as car problems or maintenance problems. I've noticed as time goes by that we're overcoming the stereotypes...the typical stereotype that I've always had, and a lot of people used to have but is changing, concerns the guy who stays-at-home...that he can't find a job, he's fallen down on his responsibility, so his wife has to go out and work. Or, he's got some other problems where he doesn't want to be a man, but wants to come home and be a wife. So, those stereotypical attitudes are changing and once they meet me, it changes how people look at me and what I do.

Yet, this spouse said that he never joined the spouse group because he would have been treated like a second-class member:

> Usually, they would invite my wife to join. Even though she is the active-duty member, she's usually invited. Every command handles it differently. I think they still want to hang on to the notion of the officers' wives club. And at the last place, it was the officers' wives and spouses club. I could have come in as an associate member, but wouldn't have had any voting power. Whereas, my wife could come in as the active-duty member, and she would have full rights and could vote. That was funny.

But, each club handles it differently. There probably are more guys getting involved now, than used to be.

An Admiral's husband [S] shared some of his experiences in various clubs:

> The first time I joined a spouses group was when she went to the Academy. I was invited to join. Then later on, when she became a commanding officer of a base, there was a substantial wives club and they changed their name. The spouses deliberated over that when I got there, but I let them make the decision by themselves, but they decided it was the right thing to do. I don't think I would have joined at the Academy unless I had been invited. So, the first one I would have joined is when she became CO. I don't feel uncomfortable being the only male, because I've always been the only one. And it's not only the officers, the enlisted male spouses don't join either. As honorary president of both clubs, I actually enjoyed the enlisted club more, because the officer wives were very independent and didn't even want to follow their own by-laws. While the enlisted club was a more positive atmosphere. I'm used to being the only man, it goes with the territory. Being the only male you are treated differently, but if there were a lot of men, I would just be one of many. All the women's clubs I've been involved with have been very nice to me, and very considerate of the fact that I am the only male. They sort of went out of their way to make me feel welcome, letting me participate in any way that I can.

He then lamented over the fact that, in general, male spouses would not participate despite his efforts to personally invite them:

> One of the things I wish the male spouses would do is get more involved with the spouse clubs. I know they are a distinct minority. I've worked in the past few years to get more males involved, but they show up for one meeting and they sort of lose interest. It's not that they don't have the time, but I don't know why it doesn't appeal to them. It may be different for me, because I enjoy being involved in the club and am interested in what they are involved in...and the welfare of the command. I guess that maybe the male spouses feel that they aren't really interested in doing these arts and crafts bazaars and all the work involved with wine tasting events. I don't know if there are any programs that will entice more males to participate and see what the other spouses are doing. I think the women are a lot more interested than the males. But, if a person doesn't want to join, they don't want to join. I don't know if it is a lack of education or what, but I think as they get more senior, they will get more involved if their female spouse becomes a Commander or above and starts getting command. I think then they will take a greater interest and say, "Maybe I

should see what the issues are that the families are being confronted with everyday and get more involved with the command." That is what happened with me.

This spouse [S] also commented that the wives were quick to take advantage of his physical strength, but refused to change the name of their club:

> I was the first male to ever be admitted to the Naval Academy wives club—I found out that the women enjoyed having a strong back around to move furniture—and they refused to change the name. They will be the last to change. I don't know if they have changed it yet, and there have been a number of females assigned there who are married. That was one issue we didn't want to take on, and one issue we didn't do here. Because, if we had come in and said the club has to change its name to "spouses", that creates more tension than anything else. I think the club voted on their own prior to my arrival to change the name here. Now, two years later they don't think anything of it.

A stay-at-home care-giver [R] admitted that he was at a "networking" disadvantage as a male because he did not like participating in these groups:

> I'm at a little disadvantage being a male. I can look at it from two sides—I'm not the most outgoing person in the world, and I don't seek out other people to socialize with, but yes, if I did participate, I would have a much larger group of people I could count on [to help out with the kids in an emergency situation]. You could say I have two women spouses that I could count on all the time, two more some of the time, and the rest would be difficult. So, my pool would be bigger if I was female.

One Navy cryptology officer [25] married to a TC spouse who was also a stay-at-home dad, replied that her husband does not fit into the traditional spouse support structure. When asked to provide recommendations for new spouse support programs, she did a good job of summarizing a lot of the issues facing male civilian spouses serving in a "non-traditional" male role:

> You can change the name of the Navy wives club, but it really hasn't changed. I mean, it's really a woman's organization, and the male spouse population is not large enough to support a husband's organization. So, I really don't have any quick solutions. I don't know what it would be. The

ombudsman thing seems to not really work that well either. It would be like my husband calling someone else's wife for, you know, it's just not right...When I was deployed, he kept in touch with male officers at my command. There was some sort of support there, it was a very small command, but there was a support structure to some degree, and oddly enough, it was during the war and we were in Japan, and all the wives from the wing were stranded there without their husbands, so he sort of turned into a support structure for them! That kind of worked, that worked out okay really, but it wasn't a command thing, it was more a neighbors, neighborhood thing. There were times where he would change their flat tires and they would help out with the children, so it happens, but not in a command-organized way. It happened due to proximity, because we were overseas, but I think it would happen that way if I were stationed in the States and I had to deploy. I think it would happen that way as a neighborhood thing, all though we haven't been in that kind of situation since we've had kids, where he would have to rely on neighbors who are not military. He has no interest in participating in the command-wide things, but, yeah he may feel a bit isolated, but, it's kind of a fine line, you want to help out and everyone's there without their spouses, and you really are all in the same situation. But in an organized fashion, he wouldn't do any of that, but as far as "let's go do something," he's okay with that...hopefully their husbands were okay with it. Come on, it's lonely, it really is, and he didn't have a lot of other men to talk to. I think that's okay with him, he'll talk to anybody. He doesn't have a lot of men friends. It was survivable, that's the way to put it, I guess.

D. COUPLE THEMES

This third group of themes attempts to provide insight into the decision-making of the couple as a unit. Attention is given to the values important to these families that directly affect the officers' decisions to remain in the service. The first theme investigates the marital status of these couples and provides qualitative data that suggest the dual-military arrangement may no longer be the preferred arrangement of women officers. The next two themes center around dual-earner family issues and the couples' response to career conflict. The last two issues revolve around how well the couples

adapt to gender-role conflicts that may arise when the wife is the primary bread-winner and the husband assumes a greater share of the responsibility in running the household.

1. Most Interviewees Are in Their First Marriage

Most of the couples in this sample were married for the first time. The husbands were slightly more likely to be remarried than were the officers—34 percent of the spouses were married for the second time compared with 28 percent of their wives.

Of the nine officers who were remarried, six volunteered that they had previously been married to another military member (this question was not specifically asked of all respondents). Four officers commented on the difficulties they had encountered in maintaining a dual-military marriage, which contributed to the break-up—long separations and the need for one career to take priority over the other. One Naval Academy graduate [4] with nine YOS mentioned the difficulty of co-locating two military spouses. She said that being married to a civilian is much better because:

> You don't have to try and co-locate, you can actually do it. That's a nightmare. My first marriage, we were married for four years and actually got to live together for two 6-month periods. That was a big factor in the break-up, because you don't get to live together.

Another Lieutenant [16], who was previously married to a surface warfare officer, mentioned several pitfalls to that arrangement and why she prefers her current situation:

> I was married to my first husband for three years, and if I count up all the days and months that we were together over the three years, it might add up to a year. Well, the competition between he and I is what killed us. He wasn't as successful as he thought he would be. He had dreams of making Admiral and becoming CNO. He just wasn't as successful as he wanted to be, and the competition between us made us drift apart. Let alone the time he was gone.... I have to chalk it up a little bit to stupidity, because I got married right after I graduated from college. I can look back in hindsight and say that was pretty damned stupid. But, with all the other things that factored into our relationship, the fact that we were both military was the

> worst. I don't think I would ever do it again. One of your careers will be penalized in the long run. ... I prefer being married to a civilian, because I think it was very difficult for my first husband and I to combine our lifestyles. And, that is part of the reason we ended up getting divorced in the long run. The schedules between two military members, especially with one on sea duty and one on shore duty, is so confusing and can get so unbelievable. My first three years after college, I feel like I lived 45 years of my life because there is so much tension when there is military married to military. Especially the tension between the two communities we were in, the stress was so high, everything was so high. Throw kids into that basket, forget it, it's just ten times worse, ten times worse.

Another Lieutenant [18], married to a retired Navy officer, gave her perspective on why dual-military marriages often fail:

> As a dual-military couple in my previous marriage, one of our careers had to take the back seat—mine. My previous husband was a SWO and an Admiral's aide, so we spent a lot of time apart. We were also living apart when we were dating. My current husband's previous wife was also in the military. They spent 75 percent of their marriage separated. They had some problems in the first year of marriage, and they could never get together to fix them and work through it. You really drift farther apart in that situation, so that when you finally do get together, it's too late to fix the marriage.

A cryptology officer [25], married to her current husband for ten years, explained why her former marriage to a SWO failed:

> I married one of my classmates out of the Academy, but that was very short lived. It was mostly due to separation. We weren't married the first year, we were engaged, and separated the whole time, which I spent planning the wedding. Then, we got married and he left on REFTRA [ship-wide refresher training underway]. It was 11 months between the wedding and the time we got divorced. We were separated the whole time and we were 22 years old. Plus, there are things you can not compromise on, like integrity...and you are just finding out who you are at that point.

2. Officers and Their Spouses Disagree on the Amount Their Individual Careers Conflict Over Time

Officers were asked to what extent their career interfered with their spouse's job or career intentions. Likewise, spouses were asked to what degree they felt their wife's military career interfered with their career. Only one-third (10 of 32) of the couples provided congruent responses. It is unclear whether the officers were exaggerating the degree of interference or if their spouses were understating it. In nine instances, the officer thought the interference was worse than her spouse reported, as compared with only three husbands reporting greater interference than their wives suggested.

The 1992 DoD Survey of Military Officer and Enlisted Personnel and Spouses revealed that 63 percent of civilian husbands thought their partner's military job interfered little to none with their work. However, one cannot tell from this whether the spouses were considering the interference from a long- or short-term perspective. [Ref. 28:p. 20] In comparison, 68 percent of the spouses interviewed (22 of 32) reported very little or no interference.

In contrast with their spouses, 22 officer interviewees thought that their military career interfered either completely (5), a great deal (9), or somewhat (8) with their husband's career intentions. The following paired responses show examples of the disparity in answers within these couples.

One young Lieutenant [5] fleet support officer, who was married for two and half years, said her career interfered somewhat with her husband's because:

> He's established himself, so why I'm saying that my career somewhat interferes with his is that, since he's a senior manager, he may want to be at a location a little bit longer to see the promotion opportunities. The discussions that we've had are that he would like to stay around and be an

> SES someday, if he can. And, with him being at his current position for only two years...it somewhat interferes in those long-term plans, but it's not really strong in a current sense.

In comparison, her spouse replied, "Not at all, currently or to date. We've been lucky."

A medical service corps officer [7] had only been married just over a year to her retired-Navy husband. She thought her career interfered with that of her partner a great deal:

> Due to location causing periodic forced separation. Now, he's in a consulting status working part-time. He has to travel, vice working out of a fixed location. He had to quit [his last job] due to location, basically. He's unique, still with the same company, but in a consulting status. This has forced him to travel, forced separation for us here.

In comparison, her spouse only considered his travel requirement to be somewhat of an interference:

> I had to go from working full-time to only part-time now. But, this is not necessarily a negative interference, just different. Now, I have to travel when I work, so I'm not here. One-third of my work is tele-commuting, two-thirds of the time I'm out in Alaska or other parts of California.

A Lieutenant Commander [8], married to a retired Air Force officer for five years, thought her career interfered with her spouse's a great deal because he "isn't able to stay in one area long enough to gain any seniority." In contrast, her spouse replied that there had been very little interference:

> Actually, I don't know if it really has that much. I'm hoping with a computer background...I had a hard time getting a job in Bremerton because of where I was at and most of the jobs were over on the Seattle side...they were worried about the commute. Here I found a job very quickly, almost immediately. I wanted to find something in this area rather than San Jose. In San Jose they paid a bit higher, but it's a long commute and I didn't want to deal with that. Hopefully, with a computer background in the future, it won't be that difficult to find a job. So, in that light, as far as staying in one place and working up the chain, her career

might interfere, but considering how careers go these days, with moving from job to job, it doesn't really hurt you most of the time.

A Commander [10] in the fleet support community, married to her spouse nine years, was one of the few officers who responded that her career interfered to a lesser degree than her reported by her husband. She judged the interference as:

> Somewhat...although, it's probably a little more than that, but I don't know if it is a "great deal." If he had more of a plan, it would be a "great deal," but he really doesn't have a long-term plan. It affects what he could do in each location.

Her spouse had a stronger opinion:

> I would say a great deal, because the unions I deal with are not so conducive to moving around frequently, following someone else's career. If you move to an area where there is a lot of work, that is fine. But, if you go to an area for some other reason, and try to get work through the union, it's difficult because you aren't from around there, you are considered a traveler and outside of the local pool of guys that they hire from. So, because of that, I ended up dropping out of the electrician's union in Hawaii after a couple of years. That is sort of a regrettable thing for me, because they have real good benefits, a retirement program, and they tend to find members better work with bigger employers than I've been able to find with small-time employers—those scrappy little jobs that the other guys didn't want to bother with. Also, just like any occupation, ensuring a good reputation. Usually you find a niche, earn a reputation so people know you...then usually your opportunities are much greater once you've been somewhere a while. So, every move is starting all that over again.

Another couple, in their tenth year of marriage, had views on opposite ends of the scale. The officer, a cryptologist [25], responded that her career interfered completely due to her duty assignments in the past:

> Well, the places we've been. We've been overseas and places like that. I would say, because of the moving, it has limited the jobs he could get. The types of jobs he would have to take, I would say, probably wouldn't cover the amount of child care. So, he would be working to pay a nanny or someone like that to raise our children, since he couldn't get a job that would be like a career-type job.

In contrast, her stay-at-home spouse of eight years replied:

> Not at all, I don't think it has affected me that much. Of course, all the moving continuously affects the choices of location of where I could work. Employers out in the civilian sector don't want to hire mobile spouses. That forces you to focus more on the short-term career.

A chaplain [17], married to her TC spouse for over seven years, thought her military career interfered completely with her husband's previous career:

> We made the choice to follow my career. He was in a completely different career, and he gave it up and followed me. And, he went into a different line of work, which he's very capable in, but was more adaptable to following me. So, he completely gave up his career…the pension plan, all the benefits, the whole ball of wax. He gave it all up to follow our deal to follow me. So, we wrestled with that for a while. In fact, our first two years of marriage we were separated while he was still doing his job and I was on the ship, because it didn't make sense for him to give it up to come to a place I wasn't going to be! He was the manager of a conference center in a resort in southern California…head honcho, he ran the whole thing and just walked away from it.

Meanwhile, her spouse did not even mention this sacrifice, claiming that her career interfered very little:

> The main impact is not knowing what the Navy is going to do…the relocation part. You are going to be here for three years, and a year later the base closes and you are forced to move. Do I get to be established in an area first? We are making ends meet on our budget, but the Navy doesn't help sometimes. You have to wonder if the different organizations are talking to each other, considering the way things operate.

Of course, some of the disparity in responses can be attributed to the imprecise 5-point scale used in this study to measure career interference. However, it is also apparent that, in some cases, the individuals were considering different time horizons when responding.

Two additional responses of officers give further insight concerning the effects the transitory military lifestyle has on their husbands, which these men neglected to mention in their interviews. In one instance, the officer's career did not interfere with that of her husband because he did not quit his job and accompany her to the current assignment. This Lieutenant [26], who plans to leave the Navy at the soonest opportunity, commented:

> Not at all, because I've been a "geographical bachelor" for the last two years. Rather than impact his career, we've taken the hit in our personal lives.

A Lieutenant Commander [18] quantified the interference in the following manner:

> It's giant, because of the moves every few years. Every time he loses about 3-to-6 months of salary during the job search phase, because he wants to find something that makes him happy, not just any old job. In Monterey, it was tricky to find jobs when considering the commute and expertise needed. The last three months, the job he had paid the bills, but wasn't what he would prefer to do. He was making less than if he had been able to stay here all along and not be up-rooted for that short tour.

She went on to describe how this, in turn, affects her:

> It is also exhausting for me to watch all the interviews and marketing he goes through. It is very stressful and time consuming. It just wipes us out, while taking a lot of time away from the family. Until he found this job and was happy, I don't think he felt he was contributing to the family. It's a big deal to him that he is contributing to the family pot of money. That sense of accomplishment makes him happy. It's of big importance.

Several spouses provided insightful comments into how their wife's career interfered with that of their own. One spouse [N], employed by the local government, explained the long-term effect on his career:

> It has probably slowed my long-term career progression by two years while here in Monterey. Because, if I was at a duty station knowing we would be there for 3-to-5 years, I could get a permanent position. At the first duty station, it wasn't a problem, because when at an entry-level

> position entering a new career field, you kind of take what's out there. Now, after five years in the field, I'm ready to take the step up to the next level in the profession. And, since I'm only going to be here for two years, I'm forced to stay where I was, at the lower level. A good military analogy is fitness reports—my current job is one that isn't going to hurt me, but isn't going to necessarily help either.

Another spouse [L], who gave up his career six years ago to stay home and raise their children, responded:

> I was doing something completely different because of her job, than I am now. Even if she had a civilian job, my career opportunities would have been a lot greater, because we would have been in one place for a longer time. The transitory costs of the military make it hard to maintain a career. There's all those things, the demand of her job to move around and the temporary assignments away from home.

A former Marine officer [K], new to the stay-at-home care-giver role, replied that his wife's career had not interfered with his at all:

> It's only been three years since I was in the military. I should be able to get a job without too much delay. At my last duty station, when I left the military, I taught for two years, and was able to get the job without any problem. Now, in the future, it shouldn't be too difficult. That's one of the reasons I was the one to get out, because my occupation as a teacher would be a good career for me to follow her around to various duty stations.

3. Most Couples Are Unwilling to Split Up the Family in Cases of Career Conflict

Interviewees were asked what course of action they would likely pursue if a career conflict arose and co-location was not possible. In most cases, partners agreed on the course of action they would take, whether it involved temporarily living apart or a particular spouse giving up his or her job. The most common response given by officers (13) and spouses (18) was that the husband would give up his job and follow the officer to her next assignment. Only three officers and two spouses expected that the wife would

leave the military. This reaffirms an earlier theme that most officers intended to retire, and that most spouses supported this decision.

One former Marine officer [N] responded with an answer that typified many of the arrangements in this sample:

> I would give up my job. We already discussed this at an early stage, that at least until the 20-year point her career would take precedence, and after that,...I'm not saying that at that point she has to get out, she still gets to leave on her own terms...but at that point my career will take precedence. That really has almost more of a financial issue, because at 20 years her career in the military will be winding down, one way or the other, while my career will be financially taking off. For financial reasons, it just doesn't make sense, at that point, to follow her career since those will be my major earning years while hers are winding down. Plus, I'm not willing to live separately for long periods again. We've done that for short periods when the end was in view.

Interestingly, this spouse's wife, also in the Marine Corps, was willing to maintain separate residences for awhile despite their agreed upon arrangement:

> If it was a real good deal for him, like he got a city manager job and I had to move. Then, without any children, we have a little more finances that we would live separately if we had to.... Heck, we've done it before in my career. He would fly back and forth for the weekends. Now, if it was something that was going to be for longer than a year, no, because it's too costly.

Another ex-enlisted spouse [FF] did not hesitate in saying:

> I would give up my job, no question. We planned out her career six years ago to get her where we are today. I'm not saying she's here because of me, but we're a team, and I think that's a big part of her success. I'm behind her 100 percent.

One long-time, stay-at-home care-giver [L] responded that it was not originally his decision to give up his career:

> I would give up my job like I already have. I didn't know I would ahead of time. That was a process we went through, where I really had to come to grips with that. We had really been dancing around the issue for years.

> Everywhere we would go, I would try and enter aviation again, and it would cost a lot of money to keep getting me current.... It just finally got to the point, where we came to the decision we would stop pursuing my career and support hers full-time. I don't know if a lot of guys have done that...most have not come to that final decision, I suspect. But, I think it has been a lot better for our kids.

Couples who had experienced separation in the past were generally unwilling to put up with that prospect in the future. In many cases (24 of 32), the interviewees had endured periods of separation as dual-military couples before the husband separated or retired from the service. These separations ranged from one month to as long as five years, in one case. Ten couples had experienced a cumulative separation time of one year or longer. One Lieutenant Commander [31], and mother of three children, explained why her views on separation changed over time:

> I think when we first got married, when I was an Ensign and he was an O-4, we might have maintained separate residences before we had any children. In the future, that would be a hard decision to make because the separation was horrible. We have an experience with doing that for 16 months and we're not going to do that again. It would depend on who really wanted their job...and it has always been that the family comes first. Someone just has to agree to take a lousy job so we can be together.

Similarly, a Lieutenant's [5] response was influenced by a previous separation of four months:

> We would temporarily maintain separate residences because we've done that once already. But, because we've done it once already, and it wasn't real fun, it would probably lead us down a road further considering what we are going to do. So, I would say we maintain temporary residences so that we wouldn't have to make a drastic decision for my career, or a drastic decision for his. Then, we would probably go further into the discussion than we did this go around, which was, "Oh yeah, we can tough it out...." It sucked! We are not going to do that again!

Most families with young children were also against maintaining separate residences for any length of time. The minority—seven officers and three spouses—who would consider living apart, usually stipulated a maximum period of about two months. One Lieutenant [16] with a 2-year-old son commented:

> It would depend on whose job is better. I think, if his job were to bring in more benefits and money to cover the whole family than mine currently does, then I would probably opt to leave. But, we would have to weigh all the pros and cons, so it's kind of hard to answer that. I can tell you that we would probably never do an unassociated tour where we would be separated. We would never do that, so we would have to choose one or the other after weighing all the pros and cons. I think it would be different if we didn't have any children.

Similarly, another Lieutenant [13], who has a young son, replied that the birth of their child was a turning point for the couple. Like the preceding officer, she would never consider living apart from her husband, instead:

> My husband would give up his job before our son was born. The birth of our son is a dividing line. Now, if a conflict arises, and I was to be sent unaccompanied, I would leave the military. Since our son's birth, I have changed my perspective on life and my role in life, as has my husband. Getting a job, whatever the job, became for him tremendously more important because he is a father. So, it wasn't just me, and what I should be doing with myself. The family is a big dividing line for us now.

A Lieutenant Commander [24] nearing retirement remarked:

> My husband would give up his job. I think I'm too close to retirement, and I think we've discussed that we don't want to live apart with two small children. But, I guess if it were a very short period, if we are talking about 30 days or less, then that would be reasonable. But if longer than that, I would say no, we would not be separated. I think before having kids...we have already experienced it where I went on ahead and he followed me a month and a half later. That was acceptable, because we didn't have kids at the time.

One officer [15] was willing to leave her children behind if it was in their best interests:

> We might temporarily maintain separate residences because of not wanting to move the kids. If I got a command and it was a good enough job, I would leave, and we would keep the kids where they were with my husband. Right now, he is going to school and his job is internet-related, so he can do it any where.

4. The Officer Is the Primary Bread-Winner For Most Couples

A vast majority of the couples interviewed (27 of 32) were "non-traditional" in that the wife was the primary bread-winner. Most spouses (20 of 27) experienced no gender-role conflict or loss of self-esteem due to the military-wife's status as primary provider. The men gave various reasons for their satisfaction with the arrangement. Four interviewees—two former enlisted men and two former officers—stated that their wife had always made more money than they did. For example, a former British officer [AA] stated that his wife's status as primary bread-winner did not affect him because "it's always been that way! She even made more as an Ensign than I did when I was in the RAF."

A former Army enlisted spouse [V] stated that this role-reversal did not bother him because:

> The more she makes, the more money comes into the family. We combine all the income together and spend it together. Thus, we are better off the more successful she is in her career.

In five cases, the spouse's retirement pension contributed to his sense of well-being and acceptance of the fact that his wife currently earned a greater salary. One

retired officer [B] and full-time student thought it important that he was essentially financially independent:

> Well, in the traditional sense of a bread-winner, I guess my wife is because she makes more money than I do. I don't think this has affected me, not in the classic mid-life crisis, or something you read about, or thinking that all of a sudden I'm not important. Because, I still do the "family business" and investments and stuff like that. And, my retirement income and VA [Veteran's Administration] educational benefits make that self-supporting, in that I'm not using any of her income to finance my current activity. I think that it makes a tremendous difference that I already have that income from retirement. When we were both active-duty, and after I retired, we have had a budget telling who was paying for which expenses and we've maintained that. Being able to count on paying those things is fundamental to the stability of the "family business."

Another retired officer [Y] thought that his wife's status as the primary provider affected her to a greater extent than it did him, because:

> We are both about even. With my retirement, I make a bit more than she does, but with her benefits, we're about even. Role-reversal did not really affect me during that last tour when she was making more than me. I think it might have affected her more than me, because she felt like she was carrying more of the burden. I don't know, maybe she felt she had to pay for more than she should.

A retired Marine officer [R] did not think it affected his self-esteem:

> No, being retired already, only helped in the sense that I was really tired of doing that and was more than ready to leave. Other than the financial aspects, I never really gave up anything. I don't miss it at all. At least for the first few years, I've kept more than busy, probably too busy, so I haven't given anything up being in this situation.

Three interviewees felt that both spouses in the marriage were equally contributing to the family income. One retiree [Z] explained:

> We make close to the same. I'm not on a salary anymore, I get paid more now, but work less. Although, I would say she is still primary. It makes me a little leery of the future, because the time may come where I will have to say, "Yeah, I have to quit." The company says they will never do

that, they will never let me go, unless I say I'm leaving. So, maybe that won't happen. But, it's not as far as self-esteem.

Another spouse [EE], who was in a relatively senior government position, stated:

I think that we are both equal. I don't think that there is a primary. In terms of income, certainly mine is greater than hers, but I don't think in terms of a primary bread-winner, that we even discuss it.

Several of the spouses who were stay-at-home dads were grateful for the opportunity to spend time with their children. In some cases, these men were also part-time students, acquiring skills for their future career. One former enlisted man and part-time student [Q] explained his perspective, as if he were trying to convince himself:

I'm pretty much happy with what I'm doing, and I think that my son being around while I'm at home is nice. I'm pretty confident in myself. Right now, I feel I have a reason in my life where I'm lucky enough to be in a position to do this. If anything, it might help me to come to realize that I have a great opportunity now, while she's working, to do whatever I want to do. And, I should be thankful for that.

Similarly, one former officer [E] gave up his career for the benefit of their three children:

It doesn't affect my self-esteem because it gives me more time to do other things. At first, I was going to work and then, she was going to get out also. We talked about it, and then we decided to switch. You have to give somewhere to maintain stability and security. This way, the kids get the best deal. It's a matter of selfishness. It was either my career or the well-being of the family. The extra income can be nice, but there can always be more money later, in the future. Our moral backgrounds taught us that family is important, and that sacrifices have to be made sometimes. I could have taken a job in D.C., which would have split up the family.

Among the 32 spouses interviewed, two considered themselves to be the primary provider because they earned more than their wife. One retired officer [O] admitted that

his Navy background helped boost his self-esteem in the past when he was not the primary provider:

> Me, economically. She is a brand new O-4, and I make almost double what she does when you consider my retirement. When I was a student teacher making next to nothing, my ego and self-esteem were strong enough due to my background as a SEAL and SWO. It would have been tougher if I didn't have that background in the Navy.

Within the non-traditional group, seven spouses admitted that this role-reversal had an effect on their self-esteem. Two relationships were common among this small group of husbands—a majority (5 of 7) had no, or very little, military experience, and six were homemakers or unemployed. One TC spouse [T] hoped to fill the traditional male role in the future, although his wife was currently the key bread-winner:

> It affects my self-esteem to some extent because I'm the man of the house. But, I've already faced the fact that she is the one with the greater talent at the moment. I'm working on it so maybe someday, sometime, I can call myself the bread-winner.

Similarly, another stay-at-home dad and former enlisted man [Q] responded:

> She is the bread-winner right now, but in a few years down the road that might be a problem, because eventually I want to be working and established as the bread-winner and bringing home income for the family. At this point, I don't think it's a problem. I think it's an opportunity. I think that we have it pretty lucky right now, but eventually it will change. And, that's something we will have to deal with in the future, that I'm pretty concerned with.

Another TC spouse [M], looking for employment, was asked if not being the primary provider affected his self-esteem. He replied candidly:

> Oh yes, oh yes! I think it's more a feeling of being very non-traditional, but I don't feel that I have a loss of self-esteem because my wife is the bread-winner. I'm not ashamed of that, though I've met other Marines who asked me, "So, what do you do? And that sort of thing." I think it was kind of a neutral thing for me, it didn't bother me. I think the negative side is that it has been a tougher adjustment for my wife, with her

> being the bread-winner, and having me be at home or working part-time at whatever job. I think that is tougher for her. And for me, it's been hard to find my place as to where I fit in regards to her career. How much do I get to help her career in a sense, and how much do I devote to my career so we still have a life outside of our jobs? That has been the toughest one I think, finding my identity, because the military is pretty concrete, she's a pastor, chaplain, LT, O-3.... So, I'm finding that she's very defined and I'm not.

Three fathers who stayed home to care for their young children often felt some conflict with the "homemaker" role. One former Marine [K] explained the importance of volunteering to fulfill this non-traditional role:

> It doesn't affect my self-esteem, not too terribly, I think. I have more problems feeling a lack of productivity. There's not a whole lot of tangible results from being a child-care person. Change diapers, feed her...if she's happy, she's happy and that's great, but...that's probably been more of an issue than my wife working. I think it's much easier doing this when it is a choice, and we took my feelings into consideration. She asked me if it would bother me, staying home and not working. But I was pragmatic, someone has to do it. It makes a difference, though, that I'm not doing this because I was laid off or couldn't find a job. It's voluntary.

Another former Marine [J] explained that he and his wife do not always see eye-to-eye about how he runs the household:

> Okay, let me out of the house so I can go catch a breath of fresh air and then I'm fine. I've already been a Marine, so I'm not concerned that this is going to hurt my male self-esteem, or whatever, because she knows what I can do, so that is really not an issue. It's more like running a household... what I see is different from what she sees. She says, "If I were at home, this would happen...." Well, I don't know what to say, you know? I definitely don't begrudge the time I get to spend with my daughter, because, with a lot of my contemporaries, when the kid sees them they say "daddy," but they always want to go to the mom. But for us, our daughter is equally content with both of us. That is kind of cool, I mean, I wanted to have a kid, and it's nice to see the kid wants to hang around me too. (Laugh.)

He went on to explain that his wife also suffered from some role conflict:

> I think my wife feels a whole lot of pressure as far as...now she has a home and wants to be able to take care of that home. And, her mom was pretty much home when she grew up, she worked part-time. Now, my wife wants to do that homemaker stuff and I still want to play. Now, with our own house, it's taking me a little while to get used to that homeowner mentality.

An ex-Navy Lieutenant [E] admitted that, initially, he and his wife did not agree on the extent of his role as homemaker when he left active-duty:

> It took awhile to get used to being at home and doing things I wasn't used to doing. Spending time with the children, cooking and cleaning. You have to give it a chance, and yourself time to adjust. I still have to. Plus, you have to learn to cut back on spending, since we've gone from two incomes to one. Initially, we had arguments over expectations of my role as a stay-at-home spouse. We talked about it and resolved them. I was kind of lost when I first got out. We aren't really a stickler about cleanliness because with three kids, one of whom is a 2-year-old, they make terrific messes. It drives me nuts. But, you have to train them.

One long-term stay-at-home care-giver [H] of nine years, who had not held a job since marrying his military wife, responded:

> My self-esteem has gone down since I've not been working and contributing to the financial income of the family. Plus, everyday over the last eight years, I've wondered whether I will ever work again. Will I find a job again that I can work at everyday?

5. Couples Are Primarily Egalitarian in Division of Household Chores

Spouses were asked to describe how they and their wives split responsibility for accomplishing routine household chores, including cooking, cleaning, paying bills, and grocery shopping. Just under 50 percent (14 of 30) of the interviewees responded that they performed most of these chores. About a third (11 of 30) thought that both partners shared these tasks fairly equally. Two arrangements in the sample were unique, because

the spouses were geographically separated from each other (thus, maintaining their own residences).

A third husband, who was also living apart from his wife, was praised by her for being a super husband. He not only maintained their primary residence, but cared for his mother-in-law, who also lived with him. Then, on weekends, this spouse commuted two hours to the base where his chaplain-wife was stationed, to buy food and pre-cook it, so she would have something to eat during the next week. This husband [P], who also maintained his own business as a general contractor, explained why he went to such efforts:

> She's tired, she will eat what is in the house, but it has to be there. She doesn't like to go shopping. She says I should, because I'm the one who will put the meals together. A little role-reversal there? Yeah! I precook things on the weekend so she only has to thaw and heat. She would rather be here doing this job than being at home preparing meals from scratch. So, my job is to prepare a mass quantity of prepared stuff for her to put together or reheat. I tell my wife, "You have to learn how to do these things like shopping and providing for yourself, because if I got caught one weekend and couldn't come down, then you would starve and still hold me accountable. Now, that's not fair! If you want to eat, you need to be able to do this too!" We spend her salary on food for the three of us. Her mom lives with us too.

According to these spouses, the wife was primarily responsible for a majority of these chores in only five households. All five were dual-earner families with children. In most instances (9 of 14) in which the husband had primary responsibility for a majority of the tasks, he was also unemployed outside of the home (e.g., homemaker, student). Of the 11 couples who equally split the workload, about half (6 of 11) had children. Two spouses tele-commuted to work from home, and three were either full- or part-time students. Interestingly, of the four tasks, the officer was least likely to have primary

responsibility for cleaning (4 of 30), and was most likely to pay the bills (14 of 30). Spouses were primarily responsible for cleaning (13 of 30) and grocery shopping (13 of 30).

One stay-at-home dad and part-time student [J] explained how the chores are divided in his household:

> During the week I do most of the meals and the chores and go to the commissary. We have a schedule of things we do each day, throughout the week. If I don't finish them, she will. On the weekends, she cooks and does the remaining chores. So, it's fairly equal overall. What else am I going to do, watch soap operas? I keep busy, and still feel I have plenty of time to do whatever I want to do if the baby goes to sleep. She's the number person though, she pays the bills.

Another spouse [H], who cares for his two children, answered that it takes both of them to cook—one to prepare the kids' food and the other to make what they eat.

Most interviewees explained that they scheduled the household chores based on their individual work schedules at the time. For instance, one employed husband [N] replied:

> It really depends on our individual schedules at the time. If she is at a busy time of the quarter with school, then I do more, and when I'm really busy on a big project, then she does most of this stuff. I pay bills, because she's a financial management type and doesn't want to deal with the money matters at home. She just wants to get away from that sort of thing.

Similarly, another homemaker [L] had this to say:

> It depends on her school schedule, she's assumed more now that she has more time at home. We have a pretty even arrangement there, and I've taken up some part-time photography, which gets me out of the house more, so she has picked up a few more of the household duties. At the previous command, I did almost 100 percent of the stuff because she had very little time.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW AVENUES OF SPOUSE SUPPORT

All interviewees were asked if they had any recommendations on how the Navy could provide better spouse support. One-third of the spouses (11 of 32) and two officers responded that they did not require any support from the Navy. Nine individuals gave no response. The remaining interviewees provided several notable responses, which generally centered around the key areas listed below:

1. Improve SEAP to help relocating spouses find a job—16
2. Change the purpose of the spouses club—10
3. Improve the existing FSC programs or add new ones—8
4. Emphasize male spouses more in existing programs—6
5. Improve the child care program—5
6. Change the culture in the Navy and/or Marine Corps—5
7. Be more flexible in the military assignment process—2

Recommendations requiring further explanation are described in detail below. In some cases, interviewee comments are also provided.

1. Spouse Employment Assistance Program

Improving this program was the number one recommendation given by officers and spouses alike. One officer suggested using a professional "head-hunter" agency if the FSCs are eventually contracted out. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the current program directors do not seem to network with the types of organizations that offer the sort of professional jobs most sought by male spouses. Others thought the program needed to be standardized across locations. Several spouses remarked that the program was useful at one duty station while essentially worthless at another.

2. Wives and Spouses Clubs

Although only ten interviewees (five officers and five spouses) mentioned these spouse groups in response to this question, many others discussed them at different points during their interviews. The key complaint was that these informal groups are no longer very useful as a support mechanism. Instead, they have turned into an exclusive social club for female spouses who are unemployed. Unfortunately, these spouses are now a minority in the military community, since a majority of spouses of both genders are employed outside of the home. Several officers and a few husbands who had attended one of these groups commented that these unemployed wives were very protective of their power within these clubs and usually less accommodating of anyone different from themselves (employed). In some cases, the groups even refused to change their name to "spouses club."

One officer [5] remarked that these clubs can foster an unrealistic atmosphere, out of tune with the modern-day military. She shared a story that depicts a typical wives club meeting in Monterey:

> After I heard this about the first meeting in the fall, I was happy my husband didn't go to the meeting. I heard this from two of our classmates' wives. All the new members introduced themselves by what their husband's curriculum was, what community he was from, and how long they would be there. It wasn't, "My name is so and so, and I do this...." The reason I bring this up is that, we were laughing because if my husband had been there he would have had to say, "I'm in honor guard and I came from Washington D.C and my wife is in manpower." That is what he would have said...and I pictured my husband standing there and being asked, "What does your wife do?" And, here he is a grown man. He's lived sixteen more years than I have and been all over the world and they didn't ask any kind of question like that. And, not just of my husband, but of any of the women there. None of those questions were asked. I just thought that was really very disrespectful...because a lot of female spouses have their own life, too. My friend is a teacher with a Master's

Degree. She doesn't have to say, "I'm a helicopter and we came from Florida."

This officer's husband gave the following suggestion:

> I think, one thing I would like the military to do, not just the Navy, is change the concept of the wives club mentality. Do more than the current club does, of being simply a social setting for gossip and such stuff...to a structured monthly or quarterly outreach program for those personnel not living in military housing. Provide educational trips and other things of that nature. Getting guest speakers coming in to talk about things like family issues, family values, harassment, and things of that nature that, I think, are sorely needed. I think the overall structure needs to change. I don't think it has changed since the 1970s and WWII when these clubs first came into being.

3. New FSC Program Ideas

A few spouses thought it would be helpful if there were an orientation class available to spouses when arriving at a new area. They thought it would be useful to have an event for all families arriving in the area each month, so that they can meet people and form early friendships with others, who are also struggling to get settled in a new location. Discussion topics could include the best places to shop, buy a car, find a doctor, take one's pet, and so on.

Similarly, two spouses commented that the current sponsor program was not very helpful within the United States (CONUS). One spouse [AA] who survived two tours overseas with his wife thought commands should take the program more seriously. He explained:

> The sponsor program seems to work very well overseas. Sponsors are allowed to take two weeks off from their regular jobs to help the new arrival get settled. They help in every aspect of the relocation, from locating housing, showing where to shop, and how to get a driver's license. They are very flexible and helpful, much more so than a 1-800 number. I think that the most benefit could be derived from improving this program in CONUS, where commands and most sponsors don't seem

> to take the program seriously. If this program were more centrally guided or controlled, it may be more effective, maybe under the control of FSCs. Currently, the spouse is left out of the process in CONUS. The sponsor is only concerned about showing the new military member around at the job.

4. Child Care Program

The main concern with child care was that the current program is too inflexible. The hours that the Child Development Center is open usually do not allow time for parents to get to work if they commute, nor do they accommodate unusual working hours. Another concern was the fact that the centers will not take children when they are sick. Sometimes it is impossible to find alternative child care, which disrupts the parent's work. The general feeling held by these spouses and officers was that the military system should be run more like it is in private industry. In industry, the trend is to provide for employees' child care needs so that the parent is happy and more productive.

5. Change the Culture

These recommendations center around ways to dispel common perceptions and inappropriate assumptions about the "proper" roles women and men should fill within the military community. This addresses areas covered in great detail under officer theme number eight. One Lieutenant [9] suggests:

> Do away with the stereotype of the female spouse that stays at home. I know a lot of male spouses who have been left behind with babies who basically are alienated. This happened on my last deployment. You've got the male daddy staying at home with a 9-month old baby and he never gets contacted by the spouse club. So, he must juggle the kids and the support of the spouses left behind [mostly wives who turn to a capable man in times of crisis because the clubs do not emphasize self-reliance]. That may be a command thing more than policy. Medical—I don't know how this would change. He will go to PSD [personnel office] and the stereotypes...to get an ID...and will be told he has to be in uniform. Then, he has to convince them he is a family member. Same with medical assuming he's the active-duty member. There's a stigmatism that the male

must be on active-duty and the wife is the dependent. The assumption is always there. The Navy needs to wake-up to the reality of where we are at.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the popular perception to the contrary, a majority of female officers in the Navy and Marine Corps are married to civilians. It was once the case, when women officers constituted a smaller percentage of the active-duty force and fewer were married, that these officers were much more likely to be married to other military officers. However, analysis of the Navy and Marine Corps officer population data since 1990 reveals that the number of women married to civilians has steadily increased over the past seven years across most pay grades. In the Navy, this increase seems to coincide with the rising percentage of women who are getting married. This is not true in the Marine Corps, because the proportion of married women officers has remained steady over this period. Instead, there appears to be a complete shift in family patterns in progress, with the increase in the number of civilian husbands being offset proportionately by a decrease in the number of military spouses.

The couples in this sample seem to have adapted successfully to the challenges of the military lifestyle. The officers are career-oriented and have the full support of their civilian husbands, with only a few exceptions. Due to their veteran status, a majority of these spouses fully understand and, for the most part, accept the limitations on their personal and work lives inherent in their position as a mobile, military spouse. In a majority of these couples, the partners have explicitly agreed that the officer's military career takes precedence in cases of career conflict. The exception to this finding was in the case of one non-veteran spouse who owned his own business before marrying his

military wife. Since he had a greater income than the Lieutenant, he refused to give up his business to accompany her to her various assignments. This officer intends to resign at the end of her obligated service.

Nearly three-fourths of these couples were once dual-military. Although the husbands in these cases give various reasons for retiring or resigning, they all expressed greater satisfaction with their family situation now, than when both partners were on active-duty. Many of these couples cited a combination of factors, including the stress of maintaining two—sometimes competing—careers, family separations, and inflexible assignment policies for their decision that the husband would leave the military. Several of the men who have children stated that they wished to spend more time with their kids and be involved in raising them. This decision—to simplify their lives and forego otherwise promising careers—made by many of these men, is not unique to the military. In the corporate world, this phenomenon is called "downshifting." Downshifters

> just want a more balanced life, or just simplify their lives by taking less stressful and time-consuming jobs, offsetting the income decline with more frugal lifestyles. ... For others, the issue is time. So many demands are put on them...with all the downsizing in recent years, a lot of people ended up with one and a half or two jobs. [Ref. 22]

For the downshifting military couples in this sample, the partners realistically evaluated whose career had the most promise and would, at the same time, create the least disruption to the family. Despite society's slow acceptance of the wife as primary family provider, the veteran military spouses in this sample do not seem very concerned about the role reversal issues. In fact, ten spouses were primarily stay-at-home care-givers or homemakers. Although a few of these men admitted having some difficulty adapting to

these non-traditional male roles, most felt the advantages of their family situation outweighed the disadvantages. Further, every officer who had the experience to compare her marriage to a military or civilian spouse stated that it was much easier having a civilian husband, in all respects.

Although DoD and Department of the Navy (DoN) have made great progress in revising policies to ensure that military women married to civilians receive equitable treatment, more needs to be done. Many of the officers in this study reported that certain common practices within the military still discriminate against them and/or their civilian husbands. For example, these female officers are often slighted in conducting business within the Navy community—at medical clinics, the commisary or the exchange—due to the assumption that, because they are women, they must be dependents. It is unfortunate that these service providers and many active-duty personnel believe that they are justified in offering a different quality of service based on the "customer's" status.

Additionally, since most women in the military tend to find their prospective husbands while both are on active duty, questions concerning the military's fraternization policy often arise. The 1992 DoD Survey of Officer and Enlisted Personnel revealed that over 25 percent of women officers are married to present or former enlisted men, which is greater than the proportion married to "true civilians." [Ref. 25] Several officers in this study stated that their coworkers often assumed that they married an enlisted man, thus breaking the Navy's fraternization policy, even if this were not the case. Several of the prior enlisted spouses interviewed also described the awkwardness of their social

interactions with their wife's peers due to this presumption. In most cases, these couples reacted to this negative feedback by rarely socializing with other military couples.

The themes and interview excerpts provided in Chapter V provide some baseline data to further understand the experiences and values of female Navy and Marine Corps officers married to civilian husbands. (See Appendix E for a complete list of themes.) Although the interview sample was small, and not necessarily representative of the entire population of this subset of Navy and Marine Corps families, the difficulties and concerns highlighted are still valid and worth consideration.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Focus on this Subset of Military Families in Future Personnel Surveys

The number of women married to civilian husbands is relatively small in comparison with the number of military men married to civilians. Thus, it is necessary to target these couples in future data gathering efforts to facilitate understanding of their concerns.

2. Evaluate the Effects of Base Closures and Downsizing on the Feasibility of Military Co-Location Policies

Most of the couples interviewed in the present study were dual-military at one time. There seems to be a link between the couples' experiences while both were on active-duty and the decision for the husband to resign or retire. Many of the couples were unwilling to accept further family separation after enduring extensive periods apart while both were attempting to coordinate their military careers. As bases close and the Navy consolidates into major fleet concentration areas (primarily Norfolk and San Diego), what effect will this have on the ability of dual-military couples to co-locate? In fact, this may

improve the chances for partners in certain communities and hinder the chances for those in others, including those military personnel married to individuals in another service. To the extent that military co-location is infeasible, the numbers of military men resigning to join the ranks of the civilian husbands may increase.

3. Increase Awareness and Acceptance of this Subset of Families

This is probably the easiest and, at the same time, the most problematic recommendation to implement. In terms of resources, it costs very little. However, it is always a difficult, time-consuming task to change an organization's culture, especially those so wrapped in tradition as the Navy and Marine Corps. The DoN leadership must set an example and make it clear that women are integral and accepted members of the Navy and Marine Corps. Further, renewed efforts should be focused on delivering quality service to all members of the military community, regardless of their status—active-duty, family member, or retired. Service providers need to be reminded that men can be family members and that women officers should not have to prove their identity to earn the respect they deserve by virtue of their rank.

4. Beware of Mandating Acceptance or "Cookie-Cutter" Approaches

The comments by officers and their spouses who have participated in "spouses" clubs are revealing. Several of the civilian husbands were trailblazers in that they were the first men to ever participate in various command wives groups. In some cases, the women in these groups decided to change the club name to "spouses" for the officers' husbands. In other instances, the wives were less accepting, and the husbands were treated as second-class members, with reduced voting rights concerning the club's

purpose and events. Even though the name of the club changed, however, the focus, events, and power relationships often remained the same, making the male spouse feel uncomfortable and reluctant to participate fully, if at all. Thus, simply mandating that these groups change their name and allow men to participate fully, are not the answers to providing support for civilian husbands.

Another example concerns the SEAP, offered by the Family Service Centers. The number one recommendation given by civilian husbands for improving spouse support programs was to update this program. A majority of the men who availed themselves of this program complained that the local director did not have the networks in place to provide professional men with assistance in finding appropriate employment. These male spouses claimed that most of the job listings were more appropriate to the typically less-educated, civilian wife of a junior enlisted man, looking for hourly work to make ends meet. Thus, once again, it is clear that the spouse's gender and education level affect the type of support that they require.

C. POTENTIAL AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Due to the emphasis on female officers in this study, one should not use the results to predict and generalize for enlisted women married to civilian spouses. It is likely that married enlisted women and their civilian husbands experience greater difficulties due to difficult financial circumstances and less lucrative job opportunities for spouses (DoD surveys have shown that the spouses of enlisted personnel are, on average, less educated than are officers' spouses). It is recommended that a similar study of female enlisted members and their civilian husbands be conducted. This would reveal

whether civilian husbands married to enlisted women have similar views and experiences to their counterparts married to officers.

Another limitation of the present study is that half of the Navy officers interviewed were from the fleet support community. Since officers in this community are less likely to deploy away from their families, their experiences will likely be different from women officers in the warfare communities. Thus, it is recommended that further research be conducted to determine how civilian husbands married to Navy women (officer and enlisted) cope while their spouse is deployed or away from home for significant periods of time. It is possible that these husbands and fathers may require additional support, particularly in the areas of child care and dealing with the separation.

Finally, since only four Marine officers and spouses were interviewed, their responses may not be typical of this subset of families in the Marine Corps. It is recommended that a similar study of all married women Marines (officer and enlisted) be conducted. This study would serve at least two purposes. First, it would reveal why these women are more likely to be married to civilians than they were in the past. Is this change in family patterns a result of recent policy changes? Or, like many of the Navy officers and their husbands in the present study, do women Marines also find it more advantageous being married to a civilian? Second, the study may reveal that service differences, specific to the Marine Corps, mitigate or exacerbate the issues confronting this subset of families.

APPENDIX A. OFFICER DESIGNATOR/MOS BREAKOUT

DESIGNATOR/MOS	NUMBER
NAVY:	
170X	19
1110	2
4105	2
1610	1
1460	1
2305	1
1520	1
2900	1
SUB-TOTAL	28
MARINE CORPS:	
0402	1
0202	1
3404	1
6602	1
SUB-TOTAL	4

APPENDIX B. OFFICER DEMOGRAPHIC DATA (n=32)

OFFICER CHARACTERISTICS	NUMBER
RANK	
Lieutenant	13
Lieutenant Commander	13
Commander	1
Rear Admiral(upper half)	1
Captain	2
Major	2
COMMISSIONING SOURCE	
USNA	6
NROTC	13
OCS	8
OTHER	5
AGE	
28 to 30	9
30 to 35	9
35 to 40	10
40+	4
YEARS MARRIED	
1 to 2	4
2 to 4	6
4 to 6	7
6 to 8	7
8 to 10	4
10+	4
NUMBER OF CHILDREN	
0	12
1	9
2	7
3	4

APPENDIX C. SPOUSE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA (n=32)

SPOUSE CHARACTERISTICS	NUMBER
VETERAN	
Officer	17
Enlisted	8
NA	7
SERVICE BRANCH	
Navy	16
Marine Corps	5
Army	2
Air Force	1
Royal Air Force	1
NA	7
HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL	
High School	5
Some College	5
4-year Degree	13
Graduate Degree	9
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	
Employed full-time	19
Stay-at-home care-giver	4
Care-giver/part-time student	4
Full-time student	2
Homemaker (no children)	2
Unemployed and looking	1

APPENDIX D. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

A. Interview Questions - Officer

Background

Rank: YOS: Service: USN/USMC Designator/MOS: Source:
Years married to current spouse: First marriage: Y/ N Spouse first marriage: Y/N
Number of children: Ages: Spouse foreign national: Y/N
Your age: Spouse age: Your education level: Spouse education level:

Career Intentions

1. Do you intend to remain in the military at least until you are eligible to retire? Y N

2. If not, what will likely be your reasons for leaving?

3. Has your husband's job or career ever influenced your billet selection in the past? If so, in what way?

4. To what extent does your career interfere with your husband's job or career intentions? And in what way?

___ Completely
___ A great deal
___ Somewhat
___ Very little
___ Not at all

5. How supportive is your husband of you pursuing a career in the military?

___ Very supportive
___ Fairly supportive
___ Mixed or neutral
___ Fairly unsupportive
___ Very unsupportive

6. If a conflict arose between your career and your husband's career (e.g., unable to co-locate), what do you think would happen?

___ Temporarily maintain separate residences
___ I would leave the military
___ My husband would give up his job
___ We would get divorced

7. Have you and your spouse ever maintained separate residences for either of the following reasons and for how long?

___ No, never lived apart
___ Military training, deployment, TAD Time in months ___
___ Spouse's career Time in months ___

8. During this separation, with whom did your children reside?
___ NA - no children or never separated
___ Wife
___ Husband

8. a) If the children lived with your husband, do you feel that he was able to meet their emotional needs during this period?

9. Do you feel that it is necessary for your husband to volunteer or participate in certain social events to further your career? If yes, explain.

10. Do you feel that there are any military policies, regulations, or common practices that discriminate against military women married to civilian husbands? Explain

11. If you could recommend programs to the Navy that would provide new avenues of spouse support, what would those be?

12. What do you feel are the advantages/disadvantages of being married to a civilian husband as opposed to another military member?

B. Interview Questions - Spouse

1. Did you ever serve in the military?
   Service _____ Officer___ Enlisted___
   Years _____
   Retired Y / N Years as civilian spouse _____

2. Were you and your spouse ever on active duty at the same time? Y / N
   If so, what made you decide to get out and your wife decide to stay in the military?
   Describe your transition to civilian life?

3. How supportive are you of your wife's military career?
   ___ Very supportive
   ___ Fairly supportive
   ___ Mixed or neutral
   ___ Fairly unsupportive
   ___ Very unsupportive

4. Do you want your wife to remain in the military until she is eligible to retire?

5. Do you feel any pressure to volunteer or fill a social role to further your wife's career?
   If yes, explain.

6. Are you presently employed?
   ___ No, unemployed
   ___ No, attending school
   ___ No, homemaker
   ___ Self-employed
   ___ Yes, in my career field
   ___ Yes, but out of my field

6. a) What are your primary reasons for your decision to work or to stay at home with the children? If a stay-at-home care-giver, describe what it is like filling such a non-traditional role?

7. How would you characterize your present job?
   ___ Professional ___Vocational
   ___ Managerial ___ Consulting
   ___ Sales ___ DoD employee
   ___Technical/Engineer ___ Other

8. How would you describe your current employment situation?
   ___ Career-enhancing
   ___ Treading water
   ___ Under-employed

9. To what extent has your wife's career interfered with your career? And what affect has it had if any? If the impact has varied, explain.

___ Completely
___ A great deal
___ Somewhat
___ Very little
___ Not at all

10. If a conflict arose between your career and your wife's (e.g., unable to co-locate), what do you think would happen?

___ Temporarily maintain separate residences
___ I would give up my job
___ Your wife would leave the military
___ We would get divorced

11. Have you ever experienced difficulty finding suitable employment? If so, explain. How did this affect you? How did the situation affect your self-esteem?

12. Who do you consider to be the primary breadwinner in the family at this time? If the wife, has this role reversal affected your self-esteem in any way?

13. Does being a military dependent in the overwhelmingly male dominated world of the military affect your self-esteem or how you are treated by your wife's peers?

14. How concerned are you that your wife might be sexually harassed while in the military?

___ Very concerned
___ Somewhat concerned
___ Not at all

15. Who is the primary caregiver for your children? (e.g.., who is called when a child is sick?; who usually takes them to the doctor?)

___ Husband
___ Wife
___ Share equally

16. How understanding is your employer when you must take time off to take care of your children?

___ Very understanding
___ Somewhat understanding
___ Neutral
___ Not at all

17. How do you and your wife split responsibility for doing household chores?

Cooking -	Mostly husband	Mostly wife	Fairly equal
Cleaning -	Mostly husband	Mostly wife	Fairly equal
Paying bills -	Mostly husband	Mostly wife	Fairly equal
Grocery shopping -	Mostly husband	Mostly wife	Fairly equal

18. If you were ever separated from your wife, who did you turn to for social support?

___ Never separated
___ No one
___ Relative
___ Co-worker
___ Spouse club
___ Other

19. Are you aware of the different programs and services offered by the Navy Family Services Center? Have you ever used any of them? What was your opinion of the experience?

20. If you could recommend programs to the Navy that would provide new avenues of spouse support, what would they be?

21. What do you feel are the advantages/disadvantages of being a male civilian spouse?

22. After arriving at a new duty station, were you ever invited to join a spouses club? Did any of the other spouses make an effort to introduce themselves or invite you to a social event? Did you attend? What was it like?

23. If there are any other comments you would like to make on subjects covered or not, please feel free.

APPENDIX E. INTERVIEW THEMES

A. OFFICER THEMES

1. Most Officers Are Married to Older Men
2. Most Officers Plan to Stay Until Retirement
3. Spouse Employment Concerns and Preferences Are a Key Influence in the Officers' Assignment Decisions
4. Most Officers Do Not Think Their Husbands Need To Fill A Supportive Role to Further Their [the Officer's] Career
5. Officers Believe Their Husbands Are Capable of Fulfilling the Nurturing Role for Children in Their Absence
6. Officers Find it More Advantageous Having a Civilian Spouse, Especially if He Served in the Military
7. Officers Report Few Disadvantages, Except in Cases Where the Husband Has No Previous Military Experience
8. Many Officers Still Believe that Military Women Married to Civilians Are Discriminated Against

B. SPOUSE THEMES

1. A Majority of Spouses Have Prior Military Experience
2. Spouses Generally Perceive Their Military Service as Key to Their Acceptance Within the Military Community
3. A Majority of Spouses Are Very Supportive of Their Wife's Career
4. Over Half of the Spouses Consider Themselves Primary Care-Giver for Their Children
5. Supporting Family and Personal Satisfaction Are Primary Reasons Men Give for Working
6. Most Spouses Have Encountered Difficulty in Finding Suitable Employment
7. Employers Are Very Understanding When Spouses Require Time Off to Care for Their Children
8. One Third of the Spouses Used the Employment Assistance Program, With Mixed Satisfaction
9. Spouses Are Concerned That Their Wives Might Be Sexually Harassed and/or Discriminated Against While in the Military
10. Spouses Most Often Mentioned a Lack of Peers or Social Network as a Disadvantage
11. Spouses Reported Many Advantages to Their Situation
12. Most Spouses Are Invited to Join a Spouse Club, But Few Actually Do

C. COUPLE THEMES

1. Most Interviewees Are in Their First Marriage
2. Officers and Their Spouses Disagree on the Amount Their Individual Careers Conflict Over Time
3. Most Couples Are Unwilling to Split Up the Family in Cases of Career Conflict
4. The Officer Is the Primary Bread-Winner For Most Couples
5. Couples Are Primarily Egalitarian in Division of Household Chores

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